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# Clarke could slash tax by 3p

Diane Coyle and Colin

The Chancellor could deliver a much higger tax bonanza in next Tnesday's Budget than expected, according to City ex- nancial markets happy by foreperts. Some are now predicting up to 3 pence off the basic rate of income tax, with a giveaway worth as much as £6bn rather than the prudent £2bn-3hn they previously anticipated.

Treasury officials were concerned earlier in the week that spectacularly good figures for government spending and revnues in October would increase the political pressure for

larger tax cuts than the state of the economy justifies.

Steven Bell, chief economist

at investment bank Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said: "If the Chancellor can now keep the ficasting lower government borrowing and reduce taxes by £4bn or £5bn, there is no earthreason he will not do it ahead of the election."

A tax-cutting hudget would provide the tonic the Government desperately needs to lift the shaken morale of Tory backbenchers, who were threatening renewed rebellion over

But senior party figures cautioned against an over-generous give-away, which could turn sour, if it led to inflation and increased interest rates before the

ries of warnings on monetary aggregates and the increasing buoyancy of the housing mar-ket which should be heeded by the Chancellor," said one for-mer Cabinet minister.

A ministerial source said the Chancellor was likely to coucentrate on reducing the increasing debt burden, which had worried the City. But party sources are expecting a "inventive" Budget by the

Chancellor, an astute politician. who recognises it could be the Tories' last throw of the dice before the election.

The City economists calcuelection. There have been a se- late that better-than-forecast growth in tax revenues this year will last, giving the Gov-ernment an extra £6-8bn to split between bigger reductions in tag and a lower forecast for the public sector borrowing requirement, without having to cut spending plans very much

> "He will be able to achieve all three things simultaneously," said Adam Cole, an economist at brokers James Capel.

The City's earlier calculation's that the Budget would have to be very tight this year were based on ultra-cautious Treasury forecasts for tax revenues. In its summer forecast the Treasury revised down ex-pected revenues and revised up

expected borrowing because of last year's "missing millions" in VAT and corporation tax re-However, those missing revenues reappeared in October. Figures published on Monday

showed a surge in taxes.

According to Mr Cole, if revenues kept up the same pace for the rest of this financial year, government borrowing could end up more than £5bn under

Kevin Darlington at brokers Hoare Govett said Mr Clarke could credibly have an extra £6bn next financial year, all of it available for tax cuts if he stuck to the same borrowing forecast as before. That would allow for 3 pence off the basic rate of income tax, although he thought a combination of smaller tax cuts and reduced borrowing more likely.

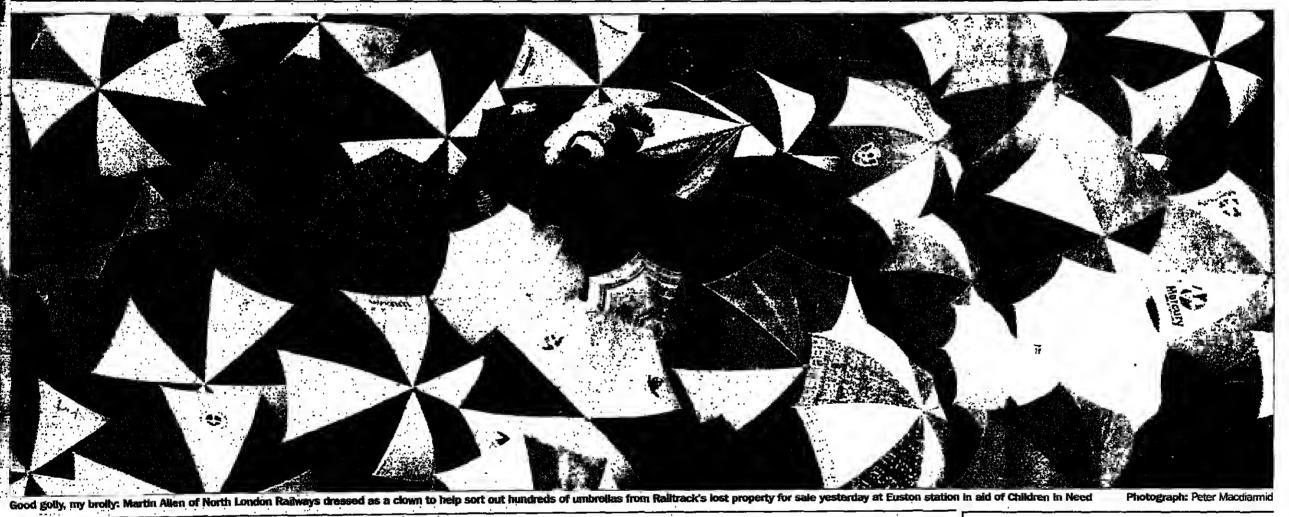
Most analysts had, until this week, been predicting that the Chancellor could trim at most

None of the City experts think that he should put more money in consumers' pockets. however. All put the unexpected upturn in the state of the Government's books down to the strong pick-up in spending, and argue that it should be used to get the public finances into

better shape.
The worst decision that can he taken at this stage of the cyele is to allow consumers to share in the benefits of an unexpectedly large reduction in the budget deficit," said Mr Jeffrey. That had been Nigel Lawson's mistake in the late 1980s.



CASH FOR QUESTIONS



#### Liberals revolt over coalition fear

Colin Brown Chief Political Correspondent

Paddy Ashdown is facing a grassroots revolt led by one of his own MPs against a Liberal Democrat coalition with New. Labour because they fear a sell out of principles for seats in a Adnet under Tony Blair....

Elizabeth Lynne, the Liberal Democrat MP for Rochdale. and 16 senior Liberal Democrats including local council leaders and parliamentary candidates, wrote to Mr Ashdown yesterday to protest at the direction the party was taking under his leadership.
In the letter which The In-

dependent has obtained, Ms
Lynne says: "We need assurances that the party is not going to be sold out for a handful
of Cabinet seats. If this were to be the case you certainly would not have our support on it. We are an independent party and

must remain so." Ms Lynne told The Independent that she believed many Liberal Democrat MPs shared her . concern about the close coopcration with the Labour Party. But leadership sources made it clear that the Liberal Democrat leader is determined to carry on with the strategy, which could have a crucial bearing on the out-come of the general election.

"We understand their con-

cerns but they are a small minority of people who are isolated," one source said. Mr Ashdown will tell the dissidents that the party endorsed his strategy by ending "equidistance" be-tween Tory and Labour at its party conference in 1995. The extraordinarily frank

terms of the letter will astonish the Liberal Democrats opponents but Mr Ashdown's aides said there were no plans to discipline Ms Lynne. The letter said: "We are to-

tally opposed to any pact or coalition with Labour before or after the next general election and feel that this is in actual fact

what you are working towards. ic of closer links with Labour at "We don't believe that you will be able to carry the party with you and it will lead to inevitable splits which could ir-reparably damage the Liberal Democrats. The focus for their unrest is

the joint commission on constitutional reform headed by Robin Cook, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, and the Liberal Democrats' Robert Maclennan, which is preparing plans for an incoming Labour government to deliver Scottish and Welsh devolution, reform of the House of Lords, and possible voting reform for the Commons. Ms Lynne, an outspoken crit-

local council level, said joint initiatives on constitutional reform and other issues were seen as a "Lib-Lab pact. We believe there should be no more joint press conferences on this or anything else ... We need to have more statements about our distinctive policies and we should

be attacking the Government and Labour on key issues." Leading party members who signed the letter included Ashley Byrne, a member of the party's federal executive. Ron Marshall, the Liberal Democrat mayor of Preston, and councillor Peter Moore, leader of the Liberal Democrats in Sheffield.

#### QUICKLY

Thatcher to rescue Baroness Thatcher called on the Euro-sceptic wing of the Tory Party to turn its attacks out wards and on to Tony Blair over Europe, rather than on to the Prime Minister.

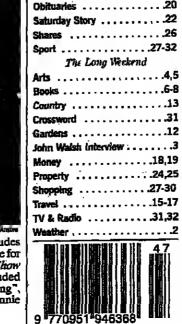
Miss World anger

Thousands of security guards have been recruited to stop disruption of the Miss World contest in Bangalore. Angry feminists have pledged to set fire

BMA opposes Blood
The BMA ethics committee urged that Diane Blood's plea to use her dead husband's sperm be rejected.

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Mr Blair's selection includes none of the records he chose for Radio 1's Nicky Campbell Show two years ago, which included REM's "Nightswimming". "Killer by Seal" and Annie Lennox's "Why".





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#### New Labour, old records for Desert Island Blair

Clare Garner

What do the 70s rock band Free, Barber's Adagio for Strings, a lit-tic-known Cambridge hand called Ezio and the Beatles have in common? They are all, The Independent can reveal, top of Tony Blair's personal charts.

The Labour leader yesterday went to Broadcasting House to bare his musical soul to Suc Lawley for Desert Island Discs. which will he broadcast at 12.15pm tomorrow. Sources at the BBC revealed

that the castaway's selection included the Barber work, possibly one of the most emotional pieces of music of all, which was the theme tune of the films Platoon and The Elephort Man.

"Cancel Today", noted for its "saccherined romanticism" and

and "Wishing Well" by Free fea-ture in Mr Blair's selection of eight times. Free's most famous song is "All Right Now". Wishing Well is described in the recently released Rough Guide to Rock as "Rodger's the lead singer heartfelt plea to Kossof [who was on drugs] to pull

himself together". Mr Blair, who himself was once the lead singer in a band named The Ugly Rimours, is understood to have chosen at least one Beatles song, at least three other songs from the 60s and 70s and only one or two classical tunes. There is a notable absence of any Rolling Stones or David Bowie. Mick Jagger is Blair's favourite icon

and he is known for his Jagger impersonations. Desert Island Discs likes to

terday was the earliest date Mr Blair could make. At a glance, it appears that he has not set out to satisfy the music tastes of the nation in his selection. In 1995 Mr Blair declared: "Rock music is the love

of my life", a sentiment reflected

in his choices. In contrast, John Major, who went on Desert Island Discs m. 1992, selected mostly classical tunes. His non-classical choices were "The Happening" by Diana Ross and the Supremes, "The Best is Yet to Come" by Frank Sinatra and Count Basie, plus a cricket commentary by John Arlott

Mr Blair's houry item remains a secret but Mr Major asked to be stranded with a fullsize replica of the Oval cricket ground and a bowling machine and Margaret Thatcher, then

Createst His

Tony Blair

III 1978 with a photograph alburn. The former Labour leader John Smith chose a case of champagne, while his predecessor Neil Kinnock asked for

advance but the BBC said yes leader of the Opposition, sup the luxury of Radio 4. record a couple of weeks in sung by a little-known Cambridge hand called Ezio,

PETALER'S BOX NO

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#### THE INDEPENDENT on Monday

The former Prime Minister tells Tory rebels to reject Blair and says socialism is 'visibly stirring'

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#### significant shorts

#### Driving ban for Princess of murdered for Wales's mother 12 handguns

Frances Shand Kydd, mother of the Princess of Wales, was and strangled by burglars was banned from driving for a year and fined £400 yesterday after being found guilty of

blood wheo she was stopped in Shore Street. Oban, on 5 April. She had denied the charge. She was acquitted of failing to give a road-side breath test without reasonable cause, after a three-day trial at Ohan Sheriff Court.

Sheriff William Dunlop told her that in giving her only the minimum ban, he was taking into account an uohlemished 42-year driving record and "that a loss of a liceoce can mean more to some people than others". Shand Kydd had been upset by a letter on the day of her arrest, the court heard,

#### Death school boy detained

A 15-year-old boy was ordered to be detained for three years at the Old Bailey for his part in the violence which led to the death of the headmaster Philip Lawrence. A trivial incident of

barging between Christopher Gan and another boy in a corridor at Mr Lawrence's school, St George's, in Maida Vale, north London, led to a feud and Gan, a Filipino, threatened to take his friends to heat up the other hoy.

A gang later attacked the hoy. Mr Lawrence was stabbed to death by the gang leader, Learco Chindamo, when he went to help the victim. Gan was convicted of conspiring to cause grievous

#### M25 pile-up

One person died and seven others were seriously injured in a pile-up on the M25 in

### Pensioner

and strangled by burglars was murdered for the collection of handguns he kept in his home, police said.

drink-driving.
Shand Kydd. 60, had more than two-and-a-half rimes the than two-and-a-half rimes the guns, were taken from About 12, including a .33 calibre Smith and Wesson, Kenneth Speakman's home in Ramsgte, Kent. They had been kept in secure cabinets in accordance with regulations. Ammunition was also taken. The dead man belooged to Ramsgate Gun Club and had held a firearms certificate for more than 50

Most of the weapons were of a culibre which MPs this week voted to han.

#### **Police wanted** to kill suspect'

Police "were out to kill" Wayne Douglas as they "rained blows" on the suspected hurglar, an inquest jury was fold.

Patrick Doyle said the former postman, who died in custody just over an hour later, was repeatedly kicked and stamped on.

They were out to kill him. that is the only way I can explain what happened that night," he told the hearing in Southwark, south London.

Mr Doyle said he was in his flat in Brixton, when he he saw Mr Douglas, 25, confronting police in the street. He heard them shouting "put it down" and saw a knife thrown to the ground. Two officers theo rushed him, pinned him to the ground and delivered five or six haton blows to his arms as he screamed in pain.

Mr Doyle went out and saw up to seven officers dragging Mr Douglas into the park and raining blows on the boy with batons," he said. "Some of the officers were also stamping on him ... on his chest, arms, legs. hack, head, everywhere."

The hearing was adjourned. Jojo Moyes

# Thatcher warns Euro-sceptics

Chief Political Correspondent

Baroness Thatcher last night rode to the rescue of the emhattled Prime Minister by calling on the Euro-sceptic right wing to turn their attacks on

Tony Blair over Europe.
The Prime Minister was threatened with a Government defeat by Labour and the Euroscepties over European Commission proposals which could undermine Britain's opt-out from the European single cur-

A row is expected in the Commons on Monday when MPs return to the House, threatening disruption of the Budget dehate on Tuesday. Downing Street made it clear yesterday Mr Major was standing firm and refusing to allow an emergency debate before the Chancellor goes to the meeting of European finance ministers (Ecofin) on 2 December.

Almost six years to the day since she was challenged in the leadership election, Lady Thatcher told the Euro-sceptics, many of whom were her oatural supporters, to reject Mr Blair's overtures and back Mr

In withering attack on Mr Blair, Lady Thatcher used the rhetoric of the Cold War warrior to deliver her warning to the Tory Party that socialism was not dead, but only sleeping, and would re-awaken if they gave it the chance by bringing down the Government

Praising Mr Major for showing "persistence, imagination and skill" in taking forward her brand of Conservatism. Lady Thatcher said the Prime Minister had gained exemptions from the social chapter which Mr Blair would sign up

She rejected the Lahour leader's admiration for her leadership. "It is flattering to learn that we are all Thatcherites now. In fact, the heen more congested...

Mr Blair did not understand the philosophy behind her pulicies and could not put them into practice. "They would be hlown off course, and the reefs of interventionism are no less dangerous, and the sirens of financial proffigacy no less alluring. than they were in the past," she

We have to appreciate the fact that socialism is oot dead. for praise was the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, seen by many as the leading right-wing candidate for the leadership.

Her remarks in a longplanned lecture in memory of Sir Nicholas Ridley, one of her



the December summit as pres-

idents of the European Unioo

and trying to stop the Northern

Ireland peace talks collapsing. In spite of the threats by the

Northamptoo North MP Tony

opt-out on the single currency.

possible beef deal for Ulster farmers.

supporters, are unlikely to damp down the full-scale revolt among Tory MPs.

Teresa Gorman, the Euro-MPs were upset because they "smell a rat" about the possiing to measures at the Ecofin meeting. They are demanding a debate helore the end of next week. Labour helped to

whip up the expectations of a Government defeat by warning that it will seek to defeat the Government on the technical sceptic Tory MP, said the Tory motion passing the documents from the European Commission

which have caused the row. ty that the Government could he brought down caused alarm bells to ring in Dublin, where ministers are both preparing for

Marlow, a Tory Euro-sceptic, to resign the whip. Tooy Blair, the Labour leader, said he would not table a no-confidence motion on the Government until

to two days could provide a way he believed Labour could win out of the current impasse pro-A month is a very long time in politics: countdown to the end of 17 years of Tory rule?

December 26 - Boxing Day; The Sun says it could be election

day; even the Euro-sceptics dismissed such speculation as

The former chancellor and think and I would plead with the that we do have a debate on Lamont said extending the desomething which is very imhate before the Dublin summit

it. Labour vesterday viewed

that prospect as highly unlike-

ly. But it could change if early

by-elections in Barnsley East

and Wirral South rob Mr

Major of his majority.

portant," he said on BBC radio. John Redwood, the former leadership challenger, told a meeting in King's Lynn: "Parliament won the right to hold the executive to account more December 13-14 - Dublin summit. Major has to defend Britain's

Minister to recognise the strength of Parliamentary feel-December 16-17 - European agriculture ministers' meeting-December 19? - possible date for Tory Wirral South by-election - defeat would put the Tories In a minority for the first time

Mr Major, who spent the day in his home to Huntingdon preparing a speech for next week's Tory Party women's conference, will meet Sir Marcus Fox, the chairman of the 1922 Committee of Tory MPs early next week to hear their concerns about the Government's string of hluoders

than three hundred years ago in

the Civil War... I urge the Prime

vided there was a proper dis-

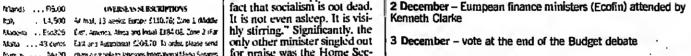
"I think in the interests of

maintaining the unity of the

Conservative Party in the run-

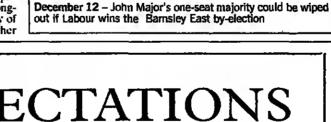
up to the election. I really do

cussion of the documents.



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THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD



Key dates for the crisis facing the Government

bate on the 'adjournment of the House'.

Tuesday 26 November - Chancellor's Budget statement

December 4/5 – possible date for Government Eumpean de-



lieve new exam rules are completely unsuitable for marking questions on Keats' concept of Another eight examiners say they have been effectively sus-

nded by an exam board until they agree to sign an agreement to comply with the oew code of practice. The protesters, all examiners for the Oxford and Cambridge

Schools Examination Board which sets exams for many of the top public schools, say that the rules penalise gifted candidates who show originality and They are also concerned that

the exam will be unfair because fewer individual scripts will be seen by examiners. A meeting of the eight due to take place last weekend to set

oext year's English exam was cancelled by the board.

Government exam advisers from the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority and inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education are unto give a "right" mark in English and that examiners could be programmed so that they would agree on a right mark.

Instead, he said, even welltrained examiners were likely to disagree by up to 5 per cent oo their marks for most essays and by up to 25 per cent or more on essays which are unfamiliar in form and attitude. He added that brilliant can-

didates from schools such as Winchester who wrote very sbort answers would be penalised under the system. The examiners argue that different subjects need different code. Dr Brian Martin, one of the

eight who has not resigned, said: "How can the same code of practice be applied to marking a physics exam and to marking a literature exam, for example the marking a question which asks about Keats' conception of heauty in his poetry? and to a question about velocity, co-ordinates and vectors?

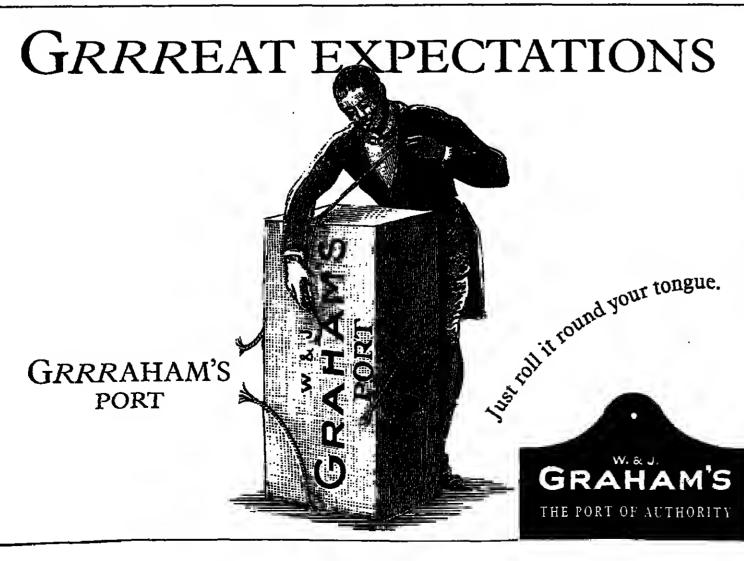
The dispute has been further complicated by the ruling that the papers in the board's summer English literature A-Level should be marked as four modules or separate componeots, even though most candidates thought they were taking a traditional course with one final exam.

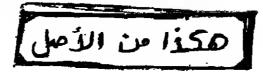
Dr Saunders and his colleagues felt that this was unfair on ahler candidates who tend to do better on non-modular

The exam board secretary, said in a letter to one of the examiners: "I cannot accept that advanced level English cannot he examined in accordance with the code of practice, not least because all the other

GCSE exam boards do this. A spokesman for the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority said: "All the boards? have signed up to the code of practice. We are not aware that there is any problem with any aspect of the code of practice. We absolutely reject the exam-

iners reasons for their actions." Leading article, page 21





The Germans left behind more than a few concrete bunkers in the Channel Islands, writes Jojo Moyes

# How Jersey's Nazi children disappeared

Mrs L was charged with having, on April 5, given birth to a child, sex unknown, and with having criminally and voluntarily concealed the body in a kitchen stove ... The accused's husband, who was serving in HM forces, was now in Italy: The accused had not heard from her husband for 16 months but had witten to her husband giving full details of the affair.

The Jersey Evening Post.

The Westaway Crèche was once a

prominent feature in the neatly manicured streets of St Helier, Jersey. But there are no references to it in the public library, and the trust that ran it is now chiefly remembered as a donor of children's shoes. The crèche, like the children it once housed, has become part of Jersey's unspoken, and controversial histo-

Records released this week by the Public Records Office suggest that as many as 900 half-German babies were born to Jersey women during the occupation. The fierce denials of this fact in Jersey show that 50 years on; some wounds have not yet

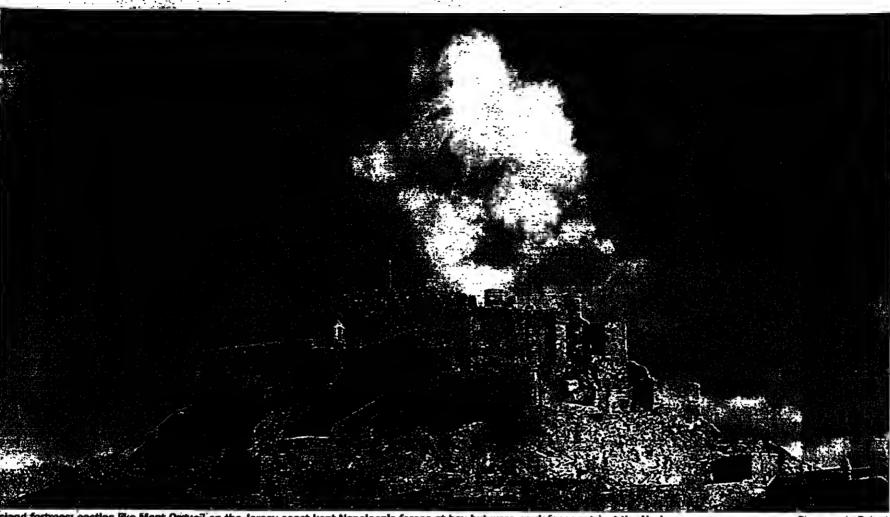
The children themselves - the only people who could shed light on the true figure - are unlikely to answer. They have "disappeared", or are carefully protected by the few remaining people who know their

Many residents who are old enough to remember, will tell you that such children were their neighbours, or at their school. But they will not tell you their names. Most will tell you that the issue "should be left well alone".

One local reporter who has covered occupation stories for many years said it was not something she would pursue strongly. We have to 527. live here, doo't we So

legitimacy figures, which largely comprised the evidence of anonymous informers, had been giveo a "quasi-credibility". Jersey residents ure of 174 births for whole occupa-

But census reports for the island



castles like Mont Orgueil on the Jersey coast kept Napoleon's forces at bay but were no defence against the Nazis

to the 400s at the start of the war, it began to creep np during the Ger-man occupation. In 1944 it reached

She complained that the new il- of whom would now be in middleage? Anne Herod, of the Jersey's Childrens' Department, said the lack of an adoption law until 1947: left the fate of many of the children undocumented. While many began life in the Westaway Creche - the newly-released papers refer to it as being "full up with those little bas show that while the annual birth rate. tards - access to their files is re-

"Many of them grew up with other families or may have been sub-sequently adopted. I think oo the So where are the children, most whole the children were assimilated," she said

Under Jersey law, any child born to a married woman had to be registered as her husband's. Unmarried women simply left the name of the father blank. In many cases, she said, the child was unlikely to know of its German heritage. The only clue, "one or two with rather Aryan Chris-

German Underground Hospital Museum, is widely considered to be the island's "occupation expert". He is still in touch with some women who. had bahies by German soldiers, many of whom left the island after the liberation. In one case, he has met the child, oow a middle-aged man. But he says of the women: They talk

to me because they know I won't give their oames away." The issue of "Jerrybags" - local women who slept with Germans - is still guaranteed to heighten feelings. James McScowen, curator of the Undropped dramatically from the 700s stricted as many of the people are Joe Mière, former curator of the derground Museum, said he had

wept tears of anger at the latest "exaggerated" claims that most Jersey

men slept with Germans. "This 70 percent thing - it's an insult to our sisters and mothers. And so what if they had? It's not as if the British army didn't do the same wherever they were."

One woman who fell in love with a Nazi deserter, still, at age 70, de-clines to be oamed publicly. "Alice" is now married with children and still lives in Jersey. Joe Mière was held in a cell oext to the German soldier and remembers her waving a "grubby white handkerchief as he was led

off for execution. Alice's own death sentence was commuted to 10 years imprisonment. The Bailiff's plea oo her behalf reads: "A young woman in love does not always weigh the consequences of her deeds when they are decided by what she believes - however wrongly - to be the welfare of her

But many Jersey residents were not as understanding. Mr Mière re-members seciog mobs chasing a oaked and bleeding "Jerrybag" through the street. Others were

#### Plan to make master race

lojo Moyes and Elizabeth Wine

Children born during the Nazi oc cupation of the Channel Islands narrowly escaped being trans ported to Germany as part of a pio gramme to produce a maste ce, a historian has claimed.

Joe Mière, former curator of Jerpital, says that documents from sources across Europe show that a unit from an elite SS squad vis ited shortly before D-Day to assess the "racial suitability" of 80 chil dren born illegitimately to Jersey

mothers.

The visit was part of the Lebens born programme initiated by Heinsome 7,500 children. Officer were ordered to father "perfec Aryans in special Lehensborn homes, while in occupied connnes suitable children were stolen

Documents dated 24 May 1944 ddressed to the RuSHA (racial init) headquarters in Berlin state: Since the occupation of the Channel Islands by German forces 30 children have been born whose athers are unquestionably mempers of the German occupying orces ... The situation of these unnarried mothers is very had in-

Mr Mière, who has studied the occupation for more than 50 rears, said many mothers did in

fact move to Germany. Michael Leapman, co-author of he book Master Race, about the Lebensborn programme, said that even at the late stage of the war, the Nazis were still being selective. "Because Himmler admired British stock the Germans were looking to increase their popula-tion by taking illegitimate children fathered by German soldiers. Whether these children had a lucky escape or not I don't know.

### BMA urged ban on use of dead husband's sperm

Patricia Wynn Davies Legal Affairs Editor

The British Medical Associa the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to reject Diane Blood's hid to have a baby using her dead husband's sperm, it emerged yesterday. In an unsolicited letter to the

authority's chairwoman, Ruth Deech, prior to Thursday night's decision to confirm the hao oo the treatment either here or abroad, the committee's chairman, Dr Stuart Horner, suggested that Stephen Blood the husband, had not properly thought through the full impli-cations of a child being created after his death.

Mrs Blood has claimed throughout that the legal requirement for written consent - preceded by an opportunity for counselling - had been ap-plied too inflexibly in her case because she and her husband had previously discussed artificial insemination after death.

But giving its reasons for refusing to use its discretionary. powers last night, the authority said in a statement: There is a clear requirement for the written and effective consent of a man after he has had the op-portunity to receive counselling and after he has had a proper op-portuoity to consider the impli-cations of a posthumous birth."



Diane Blood: Very, very upset over the contents of the BMA ethics committee letter to the HREA Photograph: PA

Tuesday, said that informed relevant. The essential issue is the rather than written consent was the real issue. "We believe that the doctrine of informed consent, which is central to medical ethics, "Ethically, whether the consent is in writing or given orally is ir-

quality of consent ... it appears [Mr Blood] made a pass ment whose validity is difficult to evaluate in retrospect."

was unacceptable to use the

country, it was equally unac-ceptable for it to be used abroad. Paul Plant, co-ordinator of the Stephen Black Baby Ap-peal, said: "Diane is disgusted and very, very upset about these commeots. This gentleman is doubting ... her evidence. He should have ensured he was in possession of all the facts."

Mrs Blood was facing a fresh crisis yesterday as her support-ers said that £50,000, in addition to £15,000 already received in donations, was urgently needed for a court appeal in January.

The authority confirmed that the frozen sperm, now 18 months old but with a shelf-life of 30 years, would continue to be safely stored until all legal avenues had been exhausted.

The fertility expert Lord Winston, a Labour peer, introduced a backbench hill this week to amend the law - but this is unlikely to make progress within the life of this parliament without Government backing. He said yesterday that ethics were nev-er fixed and the BMA commit-tee had "let Mrs Blood down".

Professor Jack Scarisbrick, chairman of the anti-abortion group Life, said: "Many will sympathise with Mrs Blood. But children should not be used as a way of coping with bereavement or hocouring a dead

The Stephen Blood Baby Appeal can be cootacted oo 0121-643 4636.

Youngsters have traditional-

rugby and progress through school teams to a university fif-

teen or a local amateur club side.

Only then would the major clubs take interest.

In rugby league, the setting up of a new Super League has



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IN THE HILLS of Tennessee, the eagerness of younger generations is rewarded with the knowledge of older ones.

Charles Ray McGee is said to be the best dog trainer in Moore County (that's him with his pride, Jake). So he's just the man young Bob Hobbs wants to talk to about getting his own pup squared away. The best traditions here, from champion dogs to prize-winning whiskey, have always been handed down. After a sip of Jack Daniel's, you'll be glad they always will be.

#### Rugby clubs hire 12-year-olds in rush to professionalism keeo for their sons to progress, could be taken in by all the

lan Burreli

Parents and sports teachers are alarmed that professional rug.

The two codes are involved in by clubs are approaching chile a race to sign up new schoolboy dren as young as 12 with written taleot. Children must sign con-

Swept along by the oew pressures of the professional game, clubs. clubs are trying to spot the prepubescent boys who will grow up to scrum down like Brian Moore or tackle the next Jonah Lome. Schoolboys are being offered free kit, medical insurance, and promised sponsored university places - and payments of £500 a came. Teachers believe youngsters are being tempted to jettison their studies and long-term

The trend has resulted from the arrival of professionalism in rugby union along with the set-ting up of the new Super League

tracts promising not to play without the permission of the

Senior rugby players warned last night that salaries in the game were only a fraction of those paid to top soccer players and could not provide long-term financial security.

Richard Moon, secretary of the Rugby Union Players' Association (Rupa), said. "We have been approached by quite a few parents and schoolteachers. In some cases the clubs have been offering the cotire school 15 incentives to join. Clubs are tar-

geting them at a young age so that they don't slip out of their grasp, but schoolchildren are po-tentially so vulnerable and they may see stars in their eyes and follow that path to the exclusion ly been encouraged to learn the rudiments of the game in mini-

Rupa has shared its fears about schoolboy cootracts with the Rugby Football Union, based at Twickenham, where England begin their international season against Italy today. David Rose, the RFU's youth development officer for the North Midlands is also con-

North Midlands, is also con-cerned. He said: "Clubs are saying to youngsters: 'We want you to sign for two or three years and you cannot play any other rugby without our permissioo'.

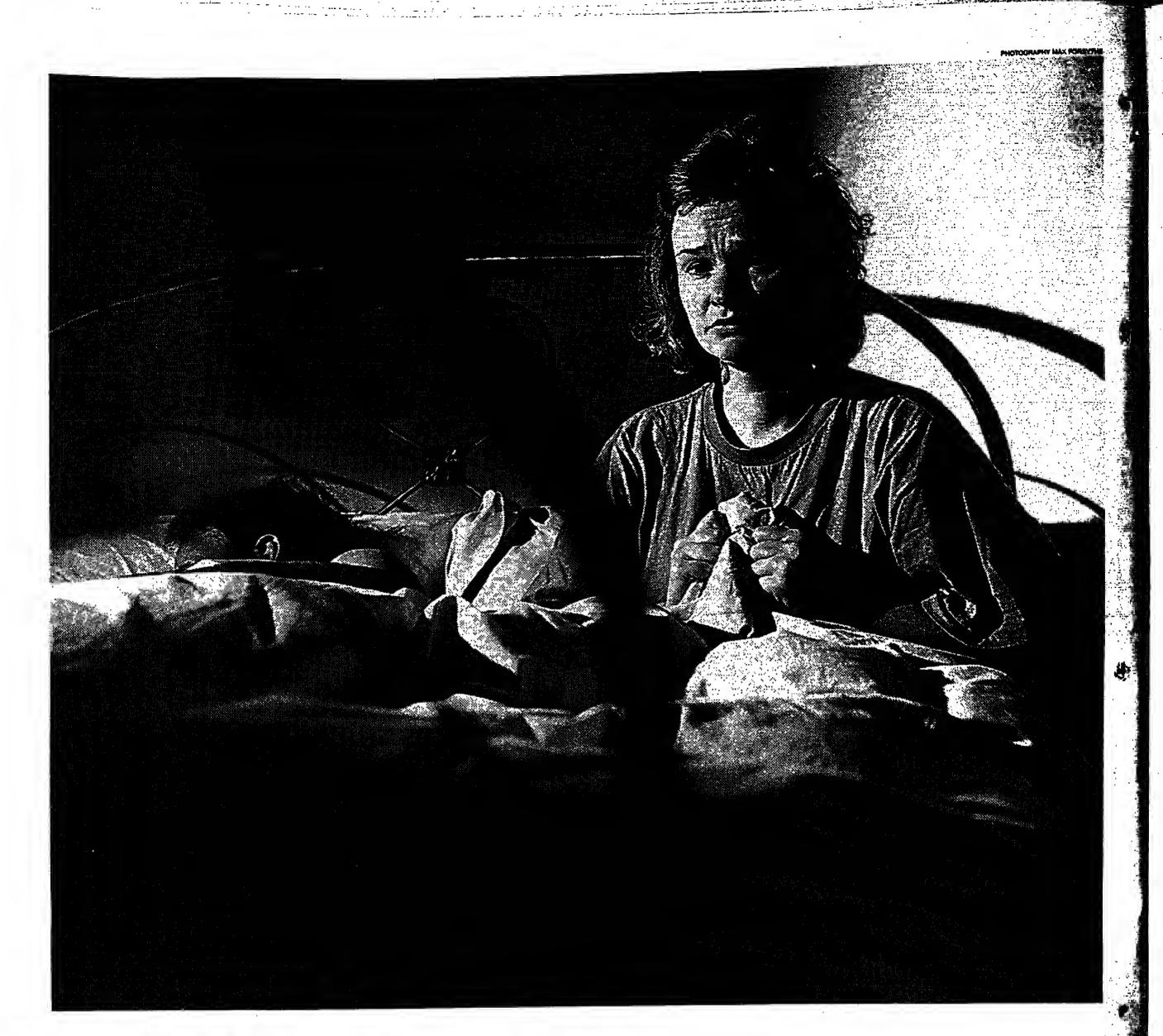
Many parents are very con-

cerned, but some dads, who are

upped the stakes in signing schools talent. Bill Chard, secretary of the Rughy League Professional Players' Associa-

tion, said 12-year-olds were now being signed up to major clubs.
"If a schoolboy is not signed by the age of 14 they might see themselves as a failure and lose

JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



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Capital classics:

Louise Jury

A plan to give in more powers to streets of the coppromoted by the foughs to beest the film industry.

In a radical reve

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Louise Jury

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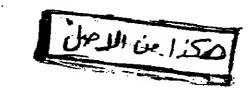


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### London calling for the world's film-makers

**Louise Jury** 

Capital draws up ambitious plans to draw the moguls and money away from Hollywood A plan to give movie-makers more powers to film on the streets of the capital is being promoted by the London bor-oughs to boost the burgeoning

heing uncooperative, the proposals would give legal backing the capital ever for the first time to councils who as a location. want to help film crews.

as necessary in return for a "rea-sonable" fee.

The London Film Commisfilm industry.

In a radical reversal of London's notorious reputation for ready widespread will make the capital even more attractive

A Bill being presented to Parliament this month would give them the right to close roads, suspend parking bays and take all action by disgruntled to remain (ALC). It was to presented to Parliament at the sented to Parliament at the flexible, some have proved cautious because of the risk of legal to take up to two years to the sented to Parliament at the sented to Parliament at the flexible, some have proved cautious because of the risk of legal to take up to two years to the sented to Parliament at the sented to Parliament at the flexible, some have proved cautious because of the risk of legal to take up to two years to the sented to Parliament at the flexible, some have proved cautious because of the risk of legal to take up to two years to the flexible and th

residents or businesses. However, some film-makers are alliamentary officer, said the measures were not a way for councils the right to charge other measures on the streets residents or businesses. However, some film-makers are alcouncils the right to charge will add to costs and force pro-

a private Bill promoted by the Association of London Gov-In the past, while many bor- ernment (ALG). It will be pre-

councils to make money, but would help all concerned.

The measures are part of the London Local Authorities Bill.

a private REI Authorities Bill. and it will require people to give notice if they're going to film, even if they're not going to do something like close a road. Chris Waterman, the ALG's

arts officer, added: "What we're trying to do is make sure that London is film-friendly."

Warner Brothers have new studios planned for Hillingdon, west London, Mr Waterman reasonable. A reasonable other business - British Gas. Telecom - is charged just for being there. said. There was also the possibility of another studio at the Arsenal in Woolwich, south-east London, and the new Star Wars This is more an enabling piece trilogy is being made at the Leavesden former aerodrome site in Hertfordshire. He added:

"We want to help provide the in-frastructure for these studios." Christabel Albery, of the London Film Commission, said:

charge is one that covers the cost of what the borough has done, like rubbish collection. of legislation than regulatory

But John Hardy, who acts as a consultant for film-makers, said: "Everyone has as much right to be on the highway as anyone else provided they don't Virtually all boroughs were cause a nuisance and hazard. No

being there.

"Paying will be a retrograde

step. At the moment, filmmakers have to be on best behaviour because you've got to get the residents on your side. Once a crew has started paying, they're going to say, 'We've paid for this.' More confrontation will result."

Chris Wheeldon, who is chairman of the Location Managers' Guild, said the legislation

smaller productions.

The key is no one has a very clear idea of what is a realistic fee. Everybody thinks of £1,000 a day, but a lot of production companies operate on a quarter of that or less. All of a suilden you can't afford to make stuff any more."

Among films being made in the capital at present are Metroland, from the book by Julian Barnes, with Emily Watson, the star of Breaking The

#### England is forever as Bond stays at home

Louise Jury

James Bond has been saved for Britam after swift work by planners, film-makers and businessmen found a new home for the legendary secret agent. The production team for the

eighteenth adventure with secret agent 007 moved on to the 12-acre site in Hertfordshire, on Tagsday.

Fears had grown that the next.

Bond movie might have to be

made abroad after the Leave den studios in Hertfordshire, where the seventeenth film, Goldeneye, was made, were booked for the making of three new Stars Wars epics. But Eon Productions, the

Bond film producers, and Herts Film Link, the county's film-promoting unit, co-operated on scouring the region to find an alternative and discovered a disused site at the village of Frogmore.

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Barbara Broccoli, the daughter of the late James Bond producer Cubby Broccoli, and



Brosnan: Starting new 007 film in Britain in February

Michael Wilson, his stepson, visited the site 10 days ago, con-sultations were held with residents and the local authority over last weekend and outtine planning permission was granted by St Albans Council on Monday. Shooting, with Pierce Brosnan as Bond, is now sched-

uled to start in February. Gordon Arnell, of Eon, said they were delighted. "It's always been American money, but Bond is a very British subject. It always worked well for the Broccoli family here."

Although one film was filmed substantially in France and another in Mexico, British crews were acknowledged world experts and a base near London gave ready access to that ex-pertise. "Over 30 years we have two or three generations of technicians who have come to work on the Bonds," Mr Arnell

Chris Holt, of Herts Film Link, said: "If everyone wants it to happen and you have the right people behind it and the

drive, you can do these things.
"We all wanted it for Britain. 'It will be a good boost for our local economy and great

Eon had accounts with around 200 small local suppliers when they were making



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after the Queen's speech.

Angry football supporters say changing the team's strip in January is exploiting youngsters who will have to buy new colours

England's kit change takes the shirt off the fans' backs



Charlie Bain

The row over changing football strips resurfaced vesterday after the Football Association announced that it would recamp the England strip in January, just days after thousands of children will have received scaled-down versions for Christmas.

The controversial move, made in conjunction with the manufacturers Umbro, will prowoke fury among parents who have spent up to £70 on the strip worn by the England team during Euro 96 only to see it go out of date.

For many die-hard fans, wearing the up-to-date kit is al-most as important as seeing their side win and every year pre-season debates rage about the insensitive profiteering of clubs who release new strips at extortionate prices.

Yesterday's move predictably outraged consumer groups and was heavily criticised by sur-porters clubs and the Labour Party, who accused the Football Association of exploiting fans. "Young supporters, who will be overjoyed to get the England

strip at Christmas, will be very disillusioned in January when the new kit comes out," said Labour's consumer affairs spokesman. Nigel Griffiths. "Foothall bosses would be better employed in introducing measures to maintain the strong

support they have from youngsters instead of cashing in on what is effectively a pre- and post-Christmas bonanza. Tony Kershaw, chairman of the National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs, said that after England's success in

would be buying the replica kit as Christmas presents. To allow people to do this and then have a change early in the New Year seems like they re wanting to clear the old stock first before producing a new

Euro 96, thnusands of parents

one," he said. "I can well imagine little

having last year's kit. and he's just had it for Christmas!" Manufacturers Umbro confirmed vesterday that England's home strip featuring the three lions on a white shirt would be revamped. The away strip, care revamped, the away strip, cases rently in indigo blue, is expect; and to be replaced next May byte a red version of that wom by that 1966 World Cup-winning team; it has been planned for a long time to introduce the news

strip early in the New Year, and it will be part of England's campaign for the World Cup.



Shearer, in the white shirt that is to be modified

a spokesman for Umbro "While Umbro can see that the Euro 96 strip could get out a date in the New Year, it is still " a very valuable strip, and will be

a collector's item." The Football Association yesterday defended the change, saying that the team's strips. were restyled every two years.
"The kits are changed on what is effectively a two-year rotal FA spokesman, Steve Donble,

said. The away kit is being changed a bit sooner because there was a chorus for the return of the red kit before the Euro 96 semi final against Germany ... It's always been ac-Johnny going to school, and the cepted that the kits have a lads will be pulling his leg for two-year life span.

#### Paracetamol in smaller packs for safety

Tighter controls on the avail-ability of paracetamol and oth-er painkillers were proposed. An overdose brings the risk yesterday by the Government. of fatal liver damage but symp-

recommended in a consultation exercise launched by the Department of Health.

The Health Minister, Gerald Malooe, said: "Analgesics are extremely safe and effective when used in the recommended doses and conditions. However, there are real concerns

about the dangers of overdose." He added: "The way forward is to ensure that full and accurate information reaches consumers. That information should be conveyed both on the label and in a patient leaflet, in a pack whose size meets their needs without leaving large numbers in the bathroom cab-

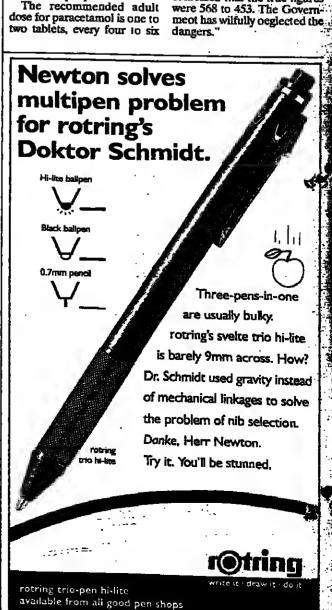
Paracetamol is an extremely safe painkiller when taken at the recommended dosage and is used as an effective remedy by millions of people.

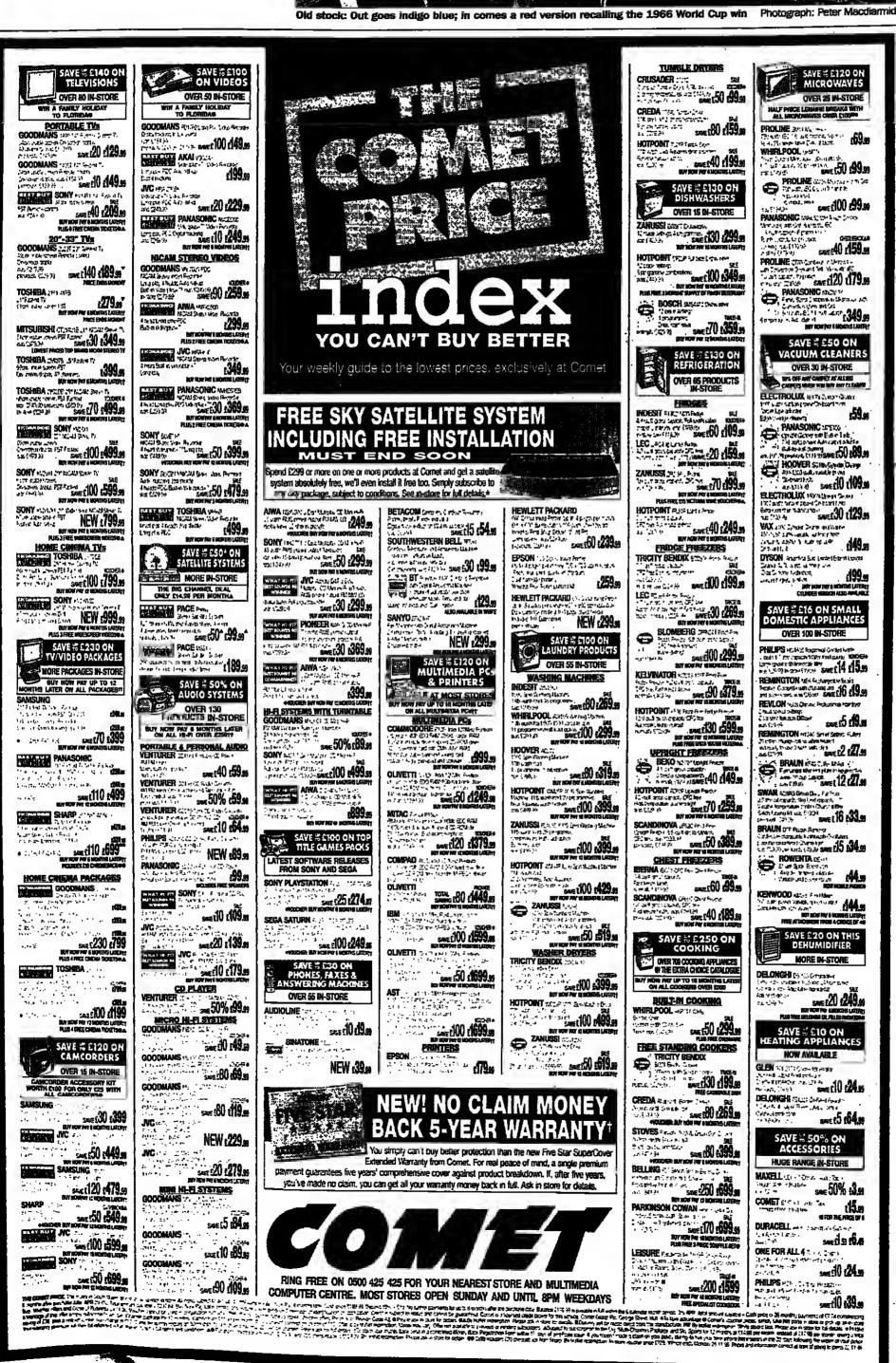
Smaller packs and greater toms may not occur for some time after taking the drug. The conosals include an additiooal label-warning for medicines containing paracetamol to say: "Immediate advice should be sought in the event of an over-

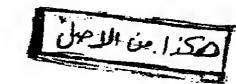
dose even if you do not feel un-They also suggest cutting the upper limit pack size for paracetamol on general sale from 25 x 500mg tablets or capsules to. 12 x 500mg tablets or capsules (adults) or 12 x 120mg tablets

or capsules (for children). Labour MP Paul Flynn, who has been campaigning for tighter restrictions on the drug. said: "Paracetamol kills twice as many people as heroin. The Government has long underestimated the deaths. -

"One health minister told me that annual deaths had gooe down from 65 to 48. Later he confessed that the true figures







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# Truckers slow France to a snail's pace

1,000 British lorries trapped by barricades in dispute over working hours

James Cusick

Up to 1,000 British lorries, many with perishable cargoes, have been caught up in a blockade of roads and motorways throughout France by 10,000 angry French lorry drivers.

The protest over working conditions, now in its fifth day, shows no sign of easing. Many regions throughout France are suffering from lengthy tail-backs, French drivers, co-ordinated by CB radios and mobile phones, are using a tactic called "l'escargot", driving at snail's pace. The demonstrations have already led to petrol stations unning out. Many in the worst hit areas in the north were yester-

between French drivers and their British counterparts caught up in the dispute, British Embassy and consulate offi-cials have reached agreement day already displaying Pas de Gas (no petrol or oil) signs. reached for special cases. sporadic outbreaks of violence French drivers allowed a po-



Jam today: Lorry drivers ere deliberately going out of their way to cause what is said to be the worst traffic chaos in France

make his way clear of one blockade. A driver whose son was with him was vesterday allowed out of another blockade to allow the youngster to receive urgent treatment for asthma.

tential bone marrow donor to Embassy officials have helped some British drivers who have simply run out of cash.

Talks between the lorry drivers' union and the government broke down yesterday. are not allowed to begin their Although there were slim hopes

that they would be resumed over the weekend, there seemed little chance of the dispute, whose origins go back to 7 November, ending quickly. Under French law lorries

urday and 10pm on Sunday. However, it is understood that the French transport ministry may be prepared to relax this rule if an agreement is reached within the next 24 hours. The

main grievance of the dispute

is over promises going back to 1994 to drivers to phase in reduced working hours (to 56 hours per week), increase waiting time payments, and for retirement at 55.

The apparent failure of the French Government to deliver for the drivers who work essentially in the private sector has meant them retaliating with a quick, well co-ordinated protest.

roads network since the national protests of May 1968.

A paralysis of normal traffic has been one tactic. The other tactic has been to blockade petroleum facilities especially at Bordeaux. Many petrol stations in Northern France are expected to run dry throughout the weekend. The situation in north west France is, according

to one official, "critical". From Bordeaux travelling north in a clockwise direction there are fixed lorry blockades at Nantes, Rennes, Caen, Rouen, Strasbourg, Riom, Chavanay, Avignon and Toulouse. At other cities traffic, although moving, is deliberately being controlled to go very, very slow. These include Dijon, Chalon, Clermont, Lyon and Lille.

There have also been barricades at Rungis on the outskirts of Paris, and at St Pierre in the Ile de France region.

At Calais, already economically hit by the fire in the tunnel, the normal busy freight car parks for the ferries looked deserted yesterday. One English driver from Canterbury said his journey to Calais had been

a "two-day nightmare". At Dover, police said that despite the potential for chaos on the other side of the Channel. lorry drivers still appeared to be taking the risk of travelling to

#### Eurotunnel losing £1m a day

French judicial officials in-specting the burned-out wreckage of five treight wagons still left inside the Channel tunnel will continue their examinations over the weekend, writes James Cusick.
With the Inter-Governmen-

tal Safety Commission suspending its discussions in Calais for the weekend, talks between the commission and representatives from Eurotunnel will re- the fire started. As with any acsume on Monday. Yesterday, senior Eurotunnel officials met in Paris to discuss strategy for next week when they continue attempts to persuade the commission that services should be allowed to restart,

The key problem, according to Eurotunnel sources, is that the severe damage sustained to be a further hlow. one of the two main tunnels rules out putting a "safety case" for the tunnel's operations.

For a quick resumption of either Eurostar's passenger train service or the Le Shuttle car train. Eurotunnel may need to place two trains in the damaged for an emergency evacuation.

Having insisted that the loss of no lives meant their safety regime functioned as planned, Eurotunnel has placed itself in the banks.

no position to demand that safety procedures now be overridden to accommodate a quick return of normal services - and the return of revenue.

Over the weekend, the wreckage of the five remaining freight wagons will be separat-ed to allow them to be brought out of the tunnel in a state that will allow engineers to contincident on this scale, the inquiry teams will be expected to both discover cause and deliver advice on future precautions.

With Eurotunnel losing £1m a day and still facing the unquantifiable task of recapturing public confidence, the prospect of a long drawn-out inquiry will Whether the safety commis-

sion will allow the company to continue using the lattice freight wagons is now being seen as crucial to short-term economic viahility. Before the fire, Eurotunnel's numerous banks which financed its mounting tunnel on stand-by at either side debts had been in discussion of the main damaged area to ac- over a £4.1bn refinancing packcommodate any future acci-dent and the subsequent need the open wagons and demands a redesigned freight service - as fire experts had previously demanded - the bill for new wagons will be an extra worry for

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#### **Celebrating its** Fifth Anniversary

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Due to the temporary closure of the Channel Tunnel, **Eurostar regrets that all services (including Eurostar Link** trains) continue to be suspended until further notice.

Customers holding tickets will be fully refunded or offered alternative booking dates, regardless of ticket type. New or amended bookings cannot currently be made for travel to be taken before 1 December 1996.

Eurostar is ready to resume services and bookings as soon as the authorities approve the re-opening of the **Channel Tunnel to Eurostar trains.** 

For further information, please call 0345 30 30 30 (all calls are local rate).



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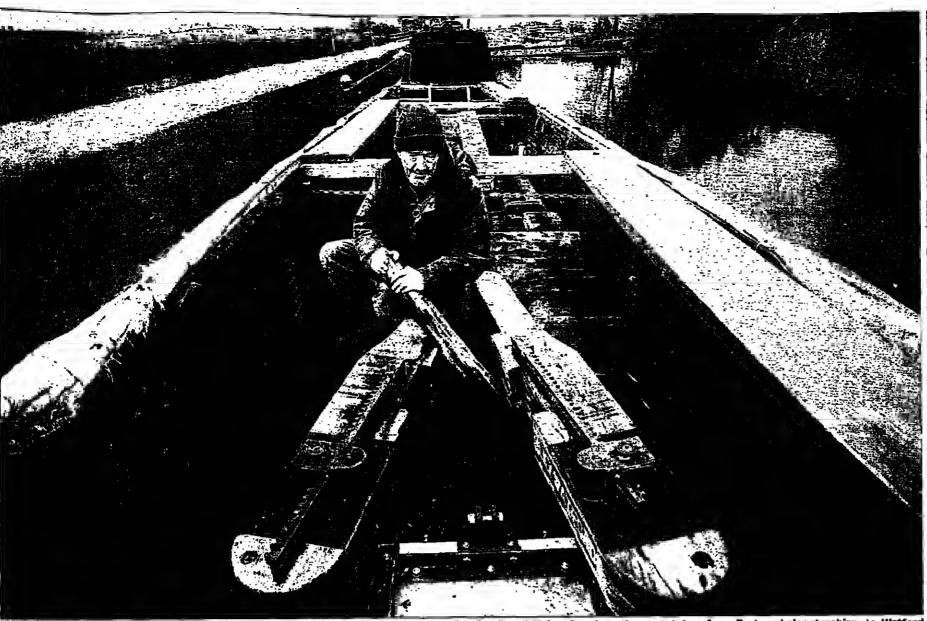
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Opening time: A boatman, Graham Horton, with the paddle gear of new lockgates for the Grand Union Canal as they are taken from Foxton, Leicestershire, to Watford Locks near Daventry. The gates, built in traditional manner by the canal's managers, British Waterways, weigh two tormes each and are 14ft high Photograph: Rui Vieira

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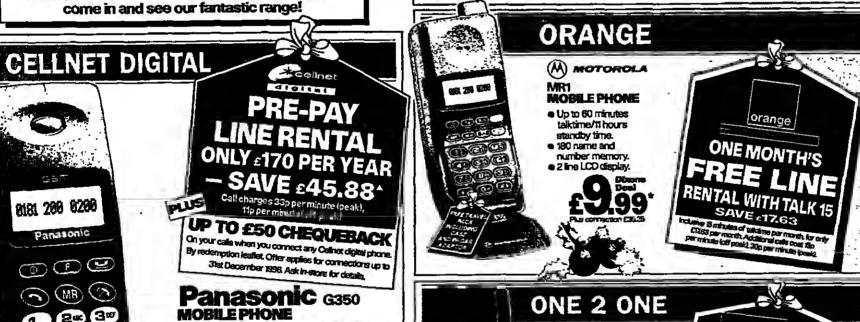
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### Accident victims must pay more

Police to charge 1,000 per cent more for official reports

Commercially-mioded police forces have increased their charges for official reports sup-plied to road accide t victims by nore than 1,000 per cent. At the same time NHS trusts

are demanding more than £100 for medical records which by law should cost £10 plus a photocopying and postage fee. Lawyers representing the vicims said last week that the deelopments were a direct result

of Treasury pressure on police forces and NHS trusts to become more cost-effective. They fear the charges will encourage insurance companies to cootest persocal injury claims knowing that it is harder for clients to get the evidence they

ooe victim of a serious road accident in Bristol was made to pay £650 for a police accideot report which until recently vould have cost £48.

Ian Walker, of solicitors Russell, Jooes and Walker, said the report bad been "absolutely vital" to his client's case and that he had no opino but to pay the Avoo and Somerset police.

He said: "Forces are decid-ing that there's money to be made here. They say, 'If we have done a specialist investigation report you will have to pay us a commercial fee for it. This is something the police do as part of their cormal functions of inestigating road accidents. They have dooe the work anyway but have decided that, with money being tight, this is a good way to make some more."

Until the increased charges, forces would supply expert accident reports, along with police notebook records from the scene of the accident and statements from witnesses, for a standard fee of £48. The police accident investi-

gator, who examines the scene of a crash to see if criminal proceedings should be brought, is able to determine the speed and measurements and photographs of the scene.

The police report can be crucial to a road accident victim claiming for a personal in-jury for which the insurance company disputes liability. The Association of Personal Injury

Lawyers has produced a report citing 22 trusts and hospitals which it claims are overcharg-

ing for records.
Oxfordshire Health Services charges £1 a page for copies of the medical records it holds. Aintree Hospitals, in Liverpool, charges a standard fee of

5 plus 25p a copy, for records, Richmond, Twickenham and Rochampton healthcare trusts, in London, attempted to charge £50 for records but reduced the fee to £10 wheo threatcoed with legal action.

Kerry Underwood, a solicitor based in St Albans, Herts, said: People are being charged exorbitant sums to obtain their records wheo they have had to pay for the treatment and the records through tax cootribu-

tions in the first place."
Trusts are often unwilling to supply health records to solicitors if they fear the information is likely to be used in litigation

Teople are being asked exorbitant fees for work that they have

already paid for'

against them. Paul Balen, of the Association of Persocal Injury Lawyers, said it was "outrageous" that trusts were "openly flouting the law" by breaching the Access to Health Records Act 1991 which requires them to submit records for £10 plus photocopying and

postage.
"We occid the Department of Health to tell the trusts that this

is unlawful."

Derek Day, deputy director
of the National Association of
Health Authorities and Trusts. said: "Trusts have been costing out their services as part of their independent status. We would using mathematical formulae, that what they are doing is measurements and pho- within the law."

The Department of Health says it is "trying to resolve the problem", while the Home Office said individual police forces were entitled to charge what they thought appropriate for specialist services.

#### **Test-tube baby** chances halved for over-35s

Liz Hunt Health Editor

A woman's chance of a successful test-tube pregnancy drops sharply after the age of 35, according to a new analysis of more than 25,000 women treated in British clinics over three years.

The age of a woman is widely accepted as one of the most important factors influencing a successful outcome in in-vitro fertilisation (IVF). However, the new data derived from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's records since its inception in 1991 pro-vides the best available evidence on the outcome of the treatment to date.

The overall success rate per IVF treatment was 14 per cent but it varied dramatically with age and was highest among women of 25 to 30. Surprisingly, womeo younger than this had lower success rates. The reason is not known and is under investigation. (It is already well-established that the "take home baby" rate varies widely between clinics, with some achieving success rates of up to 25 per cent.)

Professor Allan Templeton, of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Ab-erdeen University, and colleagues calculated that about 16 per cent of women of 25 could expect to have a child, and 17 per ceot of those aged 30. But by 35 the success rate had

fallen to 14 per cent per treatment cycle, and then fell steeply to 7 per cent by 40, and 2 per cent by 45. "No pregnancies than 45 years," according to the

report in today's issue of The

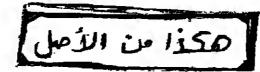
Womeo who had previously beeo pregnant had a better chance of success than those who bad never cooceived, and this effect was stronger where there had been a live birth and strongest of all in those who had had a child by IVF. The use of donor eggs, in

place of eggs removed from their ovaries of the woman uodergoing treatment, significantly improved the chances of success in women over 29 but diminished with age. This is thought to be due to the decreasing "re-ceptivity" of the womb lining for a fertilised egg. Professor Templeton said that

the cause of infertility did not appear to influence the outcome but the chances of pregnancy fell with each failed cycle of treatment: "We found that the best possibility of success is in the first cycle of IVF treatment and that there is a significant negative effect with increasing number of attempts thereafter.

The live birth rate was better for women with unexplained infertility than for those io whom tubal disease (blockage, inflammation and so on of the Fallopian tubes) had been diagnosed.

Overall, 36,961 IVF cycles (70 per cent of all those register, 3 between August 1991 and April 1994) in 26,389 women were in-vestigated. Almost three-quarters of the women had one treatment cycle; one-fifth had two, and 8 per ceot more than two. A further group of 1,416 were recorded in women older IVF cycles using donated eggs were included in the study.



news

Inside, an elephants' parade will caper alongside the Miss World finalists; outside they will be torching themselves



#### Faded pin-up in search of an admirer

)O per cent

(aports

v Doc Duvalier of Haiti and General Manuel Noriega of Panama before her, Miss World treks from continent to continent as a refugee in search of a frieodly home. A 45-year-old who has

known better times, she arrives in each new port clutching her baggage of swimsuits and slingbacks and provokes an inevitable outcry of protest. Born in England in 1951,

Miss World once wore her crown with pride. Then came the revolution of political correctness and her palace was destroyed. She was cast out and denounced as anachronistic. self-indulgent and tasteless.

"In reverse order ..." are the famous words of Eric Morley who with his wife Julia, created the contest - as the winner is crowned, and the international beauty pageant is indeed in retreat. Until recently she was hased io Bophuthatswana the globe by the BBC. But she where she attracted controversy by posing for photographs in mercial. Satellite channels will pay good money for the rights to of Operation Hunger.

This year, she has moved on to Bangalore, where she has united right-wing politicians with feminist groups in their anger at the perceived slur on their culture that she represents.
Tomorrow, as Miss World

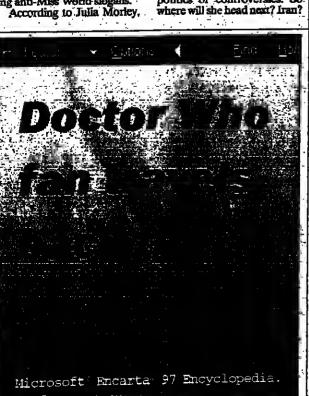
preens herself at a sumptuous event at the Chinaswamy cricket club, groups of Indian women are planning to set light to themselves in protest. One man in a southern Indian city has already burnt himself alive while shouting anti-Miss World slogans. According to Julia Morley,

Miss World is not interested in not stopped her becoming em broiled in endless international incideots over apartheid, world hunger, divorce, unmarried motherhood and the Jewish-Arab peace accord. Now she has apparently uodermined the morals of an entire subcontinent.

Eric Morley was a publicity salesman for Mecca Dancing when he dreamed up the formula for the Festival of Britain in 1951. The cootest spent 18 years at the Lyceum, Aldwych, 20 years at the Royal Albert Hall, and a brief spell at the Palladium before leaving London to go into exile in 1990. Since then Miss World has been like a former West End star per-

forming at the end of the pier. Yet the Morleys are not unhappy. In the glory days, Miss World would take to the stage for next to nothing, content with the adoration of her public watching the live coverage beamed round pay good money for the rights to film the event which once attracted a British audience of 27.5 million. International airlines sponsor the contest and busi nesses are encouraged to turn it into an international trade fair,

This year there will be a world-wide andience of 2.5 billion. But Miss World is running out of safe havens. As the Engin 1972, so their Indian sisters have firmed on her in 1996. She will not get involved, say her creators. She is not interested in politics or controversies. So



Thousands of security guards have been recruited in an attempt to prevent disruption of

Shashikala, the stocky Bengali karate black-belt who started the controversy three months ago when she organised students into a group of "vigilant women against indecent expo-

Africa. Police also found four bombs planted at contest sites.

Unfazed, Judge RP Sethi tonight's Miss World contest in
Bengalore by angry feminists,
some of whom are threatening
to set fire to themselves.

ruled that the pageant could
continue, providing that no indecent exposure, nudity, or obscenity takes place. A chorus line of 16 elephants will caper alongside the 89 leggy semi-fi-nalists as the show is broadcast

women agams; indecent expo-sare", and filed a petition to ban the contest. When India won in 1906 and again two years ago, tere were no protests.

finale, but nearly half of the However, her agitation cheaper seats remain unsold at spurred the organisers into re-treat, and the swimsuit section was diverted to the Seychelles. the Chinnaswamy Stadium. A crowd of just 10,000 is expect-ed along with the mob which will

Nearby loom enormous 20ft cardboard cut-outs of the con-test's main organiser, the Hin-

Some Indians view the contest as a trojan horse for the multi-nationals who have been eyeing India's burgeoning midket. And although feminists resent the display of flesh, more traditional women decry the imposition of Western ideals of beauty on an ancient culture.

India has sent participants to beauty pageants for the past 30 years, and the nation was almost smug with self-congranulation in 1994 when it won Miss Universe and Miss World. The latter. tonight's pageant. But she's got



HE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE FACES YET ANOTHER EMERGENCY. ITS OWN. that inevitably leed to conflict between lenging year - as staff continue to pash One year ago, the London Ambulance management and unions. Both parties themselves to answer 2000 coils a day Service had the worst emergency call for agree the leadon Ambulance Service can't est everami et elggunt neemsparam bra sponse time in Britain. Change had to come. efford to compromise on the streets. But can service at all costs. A toree add documentary. Red Base a compromise be reacted behind closed We watch as tough discussions are held One Four closely to own the london TOMORROW 9.00PM and crashe measures employed. Measures Ambulance Service through its most chair-

#### Phil is less than Cool as he joins the celebrities' masquerade



Look this way: Phil Cool appearing between his mask (left) and Jimmy Tarbuck's in an exhibition of more than 500 painted by celebrities at the Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, in London yesterday. An auction of 150 masks in aid of the Prince's Trust charity for young people will be held at the hall next Thursday

Photograph: Keith Dobney

Cheltenham College accused of 19th-century work practices

# Removal of head buys peace at school

Fran Abrams Education Correspondent

The head of Cheltenham College has resigned despite a parents' campaign to prevent his removal from the school by governors. Peter Wilkes has decided to leave the public school next summer even though an independent inquiry found that attempts to remove him had breached both natural justice and employment law. The inquiry's report also accused the school of having "19th century" employment

Mr Wilkes said yesterday that he was leaving to prevent the school from tearing itself apart. A compromise agree-ment hetween parents and gov-ernors at Cheltenham is expected to be struck today. Parwilkes should stay, that several of the governors should go, and that parents should be given seats on the governing body.

The president of the body, Nigel Farrow, resigned last week. Others may go in a restructuring exercise as part of the peace deal now being

Mr Wilkes was asked to resign after the school slipped from 147th to 205th in A-level league tables. The governors, who include General Sir John Waters, former deputy supreme allied commander Europe and Sir Michael Perry, chairman of Unilever, also criticised his managerial style and his relationships with senior staff.

However, a meeting of par-ents voted by 620 to seven in favour of Mr Wilkes' reinstatement and of the resignation of the school council (governors). They were also angry that they were initially given no expla-nation of the head's dismissal.

The case has highlighted the power of governors in private schools. All state schools are required to have elected parents on their governing bodies but in-dependent schools are not. Chellenham parents, who pay fees of around £12,000 a year, say they should be told more about what is going on.

An independent inquiry into the dispute by Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Chel-Colleges Admissions Service, said.

week. It said the management of independent schools should be open to public scrutiny, if only to ensure that justice was scen to be done.

Mr Higgins wrote: "It is ex-pected in the 1990s that the normal rules of natural justice, not to mention employment legislation, are observed. It is my view that in this case neither was observed. It seems ironic that a council which is looking for a dynamic leader to take the college into the 21st century... can still be operating employment practices which were perhaps more common in the 19th

Mr Wilkes said it was in the best interests of the school that he should not seek reinstate-



Sir Michael Perry: Critic of head's management style

ment, "Parents have been mounting a wonderful campaign to have me reinstated. While I hated the idea of letting down my loyal parents, the school's interests had to be paramount. This is tearing the place apart."
Mark Hicks Beach, chair-

man of the parents' committee set up to fight Mr Wilkes' case, said he was very disappointed by the resignation. "Mr Wilkes is a superb head-

master who has done a lot for the school, but it had to be his

"Both he and his wife have been through a lot of stress and strain in the last few weeks, and I can understand it. Whatever he has done has been in the best tenham-based Universities and interests of the school," he









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NESCAFÉ BLEND

Money values: Giscard pinpoints key issue and questions value of Paris's economic and foreign icon

### French franc feels the heat

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In a miserably cold and wet No-vember, with oil refineries barricaded by protesting lorry drivers and the public cross about the world in geoeral and France in particular, a long-taboo subject has burst on to the political agenda. Suddenly it is open season on the franc fort. France's "strong-franc" policy, an article of faith and a totem of national dignity since well be-fore Jacques Chirae became

The argument was reopened by the former president Valery Giscard d'Estaing in a column in l'Express. Rather than conceal his remarks with a discreet headline, the magazine splashed the key question over its front cover. "Should the franc be devalued? Giscard's

plan for breaking the impasse."

Mr Giscard broke not one. but two taboos. Recognising that Germany would be unlikely to agree any change in the value of the Mark against the dollar or any other currency, he proposed not only devaluing the franc by 9 per ceot to trigger do-mestic growth but also decoupling it from the Mark, which ould remove at one stroke the ing Japan, even the most pro-



cornerstone of French foreign and economic policy.

on international exchanges, the franc wobbled; in 24 hours it had lost two centimes against the Mark. Politicians weighed in as though shackles had finally heen broken. The debate was launched; the right was divided within itself; so, more quietly,

card's view included Philippe Seguin, chairman of parliament and anti-Maastricht campaign-er, Charles Pasqua, former interior minister, and Alain Madelin, former economy minister. All are infinitely more popular with the public than any member of the government.

seemed to hesitate before issu-

When an official statement came - in the form of a brief joint communique from Chan-cellor Helmut Kohl and the French Prime Minister, Alain Inppé, no one took any notice. and the politicians continued to scrap. Yesterday the governor of the Bank of France, Jean-Claude Trichet, issued a statement reiterating there was no change in its policy towards the exchange rate or the Mark, but

uncertainty remained. One reason was Mr Giscard's status as a veteran play-er in France's Europe policy, if no longer in party politics.

As one French commentator

said: "You can say what you like about Giscard, but one thing you can't say is that he is stu-pid." He would have been well aware of the likely impact of his words; he may even have been used by President Chirac to fly

With unemployment stub-hornly increasing despite a plethora of government measures to reduce it, might the French public just be willing to sacrifice a little oational pride



Cash crisis: A man joining a pensions demonstration in the wave of protests at the French nt's budget squeeze as it tries to bring the economy under control to qualify for EMU

# Buoyant Italy says its ready to rejoin ERM

In a last-minute sprint to the starting line of European monctary union, Italy served notice vesterday that it would rejoin he exchange-rate mechanism (ERM) within a week, and vowed to meet the Maastricht criteria laid down for participants in the new currency.

"Italy intends to be one of the founding members of EMU." proclaimed Carlo Azeglio iampi, the country's Finance Minister, Speaking at a European banking conference in Frankfurt, he added: "Italians are determined to do everything necessary to be an element of stability and not an element of

tension or distortion".

Mr Ciampi said the lim, forced to retreat from the ERM in 1992, would be back in the fold "m November", thus meeting one of the three main con-

ditions for EMU membership. On the other conditions. public debt and budget deficit. Rome is also very close to attaining the targets - frighteningly close in German eyes, Italy's hudget deficit is forecast to stand at 3.3 per cent of gross domestic product in the qualifying year of 1997. Under nor-

mal circumstances, that would have entided the Germans to slam the door in Mr Ciampi's face, but the 0.3 per cent overshoot is likely to be no worse than Bonn's performance.

The Bundesbank and the German parliament have reserved themselves the right to yet all applications, confident that the "Club Med" countries would sink under the weight of their own abysmal statistics. Now Bonn is having to find new excuses to keep out those it does not trust. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the top speaker at yesterday's Frankfurt event, shifted the emphasis to the less scientific concept of "long-term stability".

Emboldened by Germany's failings, former no-hopers are pressing their claims. Spain joined the vanguard yesterday with a confident prediction that the peseta would be in the hard core from the beginning.

The Club-Mcd's progress to wards fiscal rectitude is in stark contrast to the profligacy of the two countries that are driving European integration. Germany has been temporarily knocked off course by the slowdown of its economy, but for France there appears to be no end in sight for economic and political turbulence.

#### significant shorts

#### Deal eases tension in Belarus

A deal betweeo President Alexander Lukashenko and MPs has eased tensioo in Belarus. He wanted to use a referendum lomorrow to tighteo his grip on rival institutions and extend his term. He has now cancelled decrees making the results legally binding; in return. parliament agreed not to mpeach him. Reuter - Minsk

#### Jailed Chinese activist ailing

The dissident Wang Dan, jailed for 'plotting to overthrow the government', has throat and back problems in a prison that-does not have facilities to treat him, and his condition could deteriorate with the onset of winter, his mother

- Alta-

#### Scientologists convicted over

convicted of fraud and other offences in a case that could help set boundaries betweeo the power of the French state and the activity of religious groups. Charges related to the suicide of Patrice Vic, 31, after psychiatric treatment prescribed by Jean-Jacques Mazier, then head of the church io Lyons. Vie's widow said he was pressed by sessions, which he could oot afford. Mazier was convicted of unpremeditated murder and fraud and jailed for three years, half suspended. The judge said 'individuals who use a legitimate ... religious doctrine for financial ... eods and in doing so deliberately deceive a third party are liable to be prosecuted for fraud".

#### suicide case Fifteen Scientologists were

Mary Dejevsky – Paris

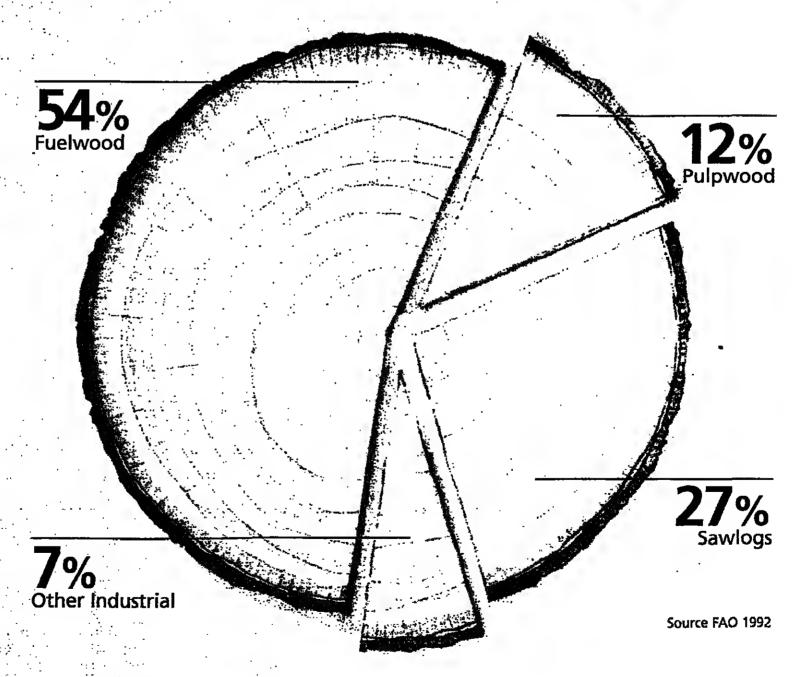
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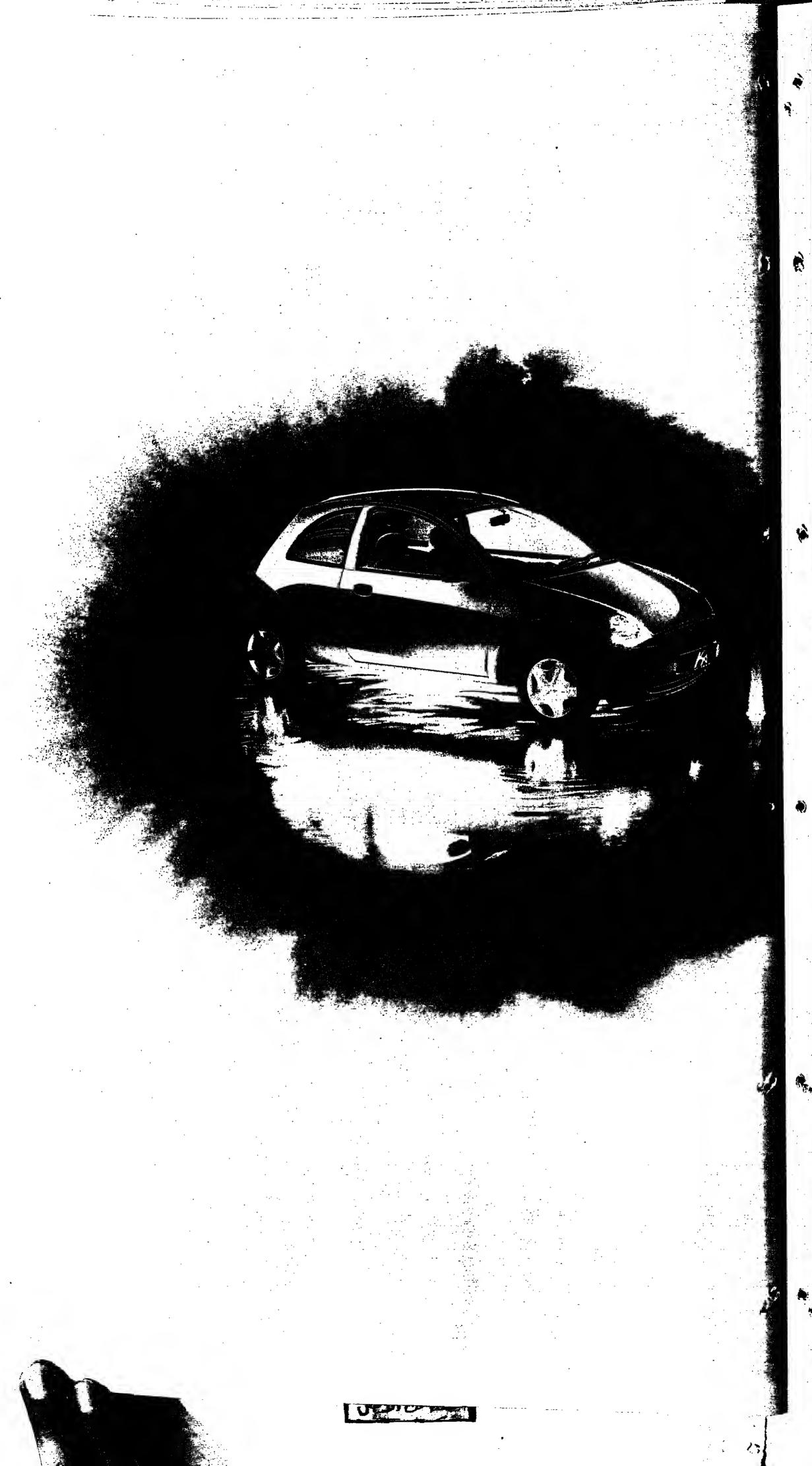


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# Bloody trade that fuels Rwanda's war

Steve Boggar

For once, it appeared that a UN arms embargo had worked. A ship, the Malo, carrying more than 80 tons of weapons bound for troubled Somalia had been seized by the Government of

It was 1993 and the UN had banned sales of weapons to Somalia as warring clansmen reduced the country to chaos. "In impounding this ship," James Michel, the Seychelles Defence Minister, said, we did the international community a service." There was no doubt, as



Key document: The Zairean end-user certificate

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the death toll in Somalia monnted, that a service had been done. Within a year, however, the weapons had been targeted by the unscrupulous operatives of a new arms procurement network set up to devise ways of circumventing yet another UN embargo - that im-posed on sales of arms to user certificate bearing the seal Rwanda after the murder of up-to a million Tutsis in April and May 1994. Mr Michel and his colleagues did not know it, but they were about to fall victim to Colonel Theoneste Bagosora. Bagosora, a former Rwanda

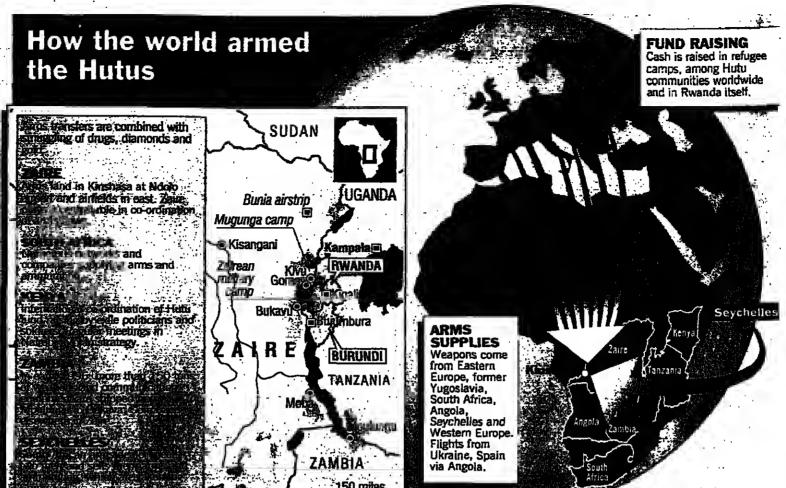
buyer for the Rwandan government in exile as it regrouped for what, had it happened, would surely have been one of the bloodiest wars in African history. The planned return to Rwanda was codenamed Operation Insecticide by Hutu mili-

Bagosora is just one of dozens of businessmen, parriots and mercenaries, operating from Kenya, Zaire, South Africa, Israel, the UK, Albania, the former Yugoslavia and Bul-garia, identified by a UN Commission of Inquiry into the extent - and sources - of illicit arms sales to Rwanda

The deals are many, the methods ingenious, but per-haps the Seychelles sting is the best example of the lengths to which the former Rwandan government would go to re-arm. According to an unpublished UN report on the Commission's work, obtained by the Independent, the deal began with an approach to the Sey-chelles government by a South African businessman, Willem Ehlers, director of a company called Delta Aero.

Ehlers said he was interest-

ed in buying the impounded weapons, including 2,500 AK47 rifles, 6,000 morrars and 5,600 fragmentation grenades, on be-half of the Zairean govern-ment, against whom there is no embargo. On 4 June 1994, he arrived in the Seychelles, accompanied by Bagosora who, with the apparent complicity of the Zairean authorities, had a of the Republic of Zaire. Two shipments were flown out of the country on 16 and 18 June more than a month after the UN embargo was imposed - before the Seychelles government became suspicious and stopped



vestigative work of the charity Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, had established that the weapons had been diverted to Goma and into the hands of the former gov-ernment forces. It was a perfect less illicit arms deals, arms sting; weapons impounded on behalf of the UN were used to

many. Highly reliable sources in Belgium, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and the United Kingdom painted a coherent picture of buge, loose, flights and arms deliveries span-ning the continent from South

the UN Commission's report, dated 28 October 1996. "Those engaged in such ac-tivities make free use of fake end-user certificates, exploit loopholes in the law, evade customs and other airport controls by making clandestine night take-offs and landings, file

ricated zone permits, evading radar tracking and observing radio silence in flight." It has been suspected for years that a number of Britons or British companies had engineered arms sales to Rwanda up to the UN embargo of 17 May 1994. But last week came proof that at government defence official, a third consignment. Media re-had become the master arms, ports, fuelled in part by the in-had become the master arms, ports, fuelled in part by the in-

pers abandoned by fleeing Hutu militiamen in eastern Zaire showed that the Isle of Man-registered company had sold £3.3m worth of arms, including consignments delivered in July.

One of the men linked to Mil-Tec. Kumar Anup Vidyarthi, vanished from his home in

traced to Nairobi but he failed to return the Independent's cells. Both men are Kenyan, a fact which, in the procurement maze, is significant. For it was in Natrobi, Kenya, that the plans for a triumphant, if bloody, return were being hatched. Each month, meetings of military officials and wealthy Hutus were held in Nairobi where money was raised for the planned invasion. It p. "ar weapons known to have or nated from Israel, Albania, Zambia, the Ukraine and Spain.

Evidence showed a fully arrived force, estimated at 50,000 men, was being trained in Zaire. It is a credit to the Commis-

sion that so much information was gleaned. It has become the norm for their requests for information from governments to be ignored. In the three months to September this year, its members travelled across Africa and Europe but, by the end of October, they were still awaiting replies to questions posed of governments in Bel-gium, Bulgaria, Camerroon, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Italy, Kenya, Malta, Portugal, Sonth Africa, Spain, the UK, Zaire

It is emerging that the arms deliveries were not contined to 1994. Two years after the imposition of the embargo, they continued, with evidence of more than 150 tons of weapons entering the country from Zambia in May of this year, and of 60 tons being flown into Zaire aboard two Ukrainian-registered aircraft, and on to the for-

mer government forces, in June. The Commission's latest task is to find out more about a Nigerian-registered aircraft carrying arms from Malta to Goma on 25 May 1994, which, according to documents recently uncovered, included one Col T. Bagosoru among its few

### Refugees massacred on return to Burundi, says

Geneva (agencies) - Nearly 300 ceived frostily but not mistreated. But the field-workers said 258 people Hutus returning from refugee camps many other refugees are trying to re-

The report, by the UN Homan

Rights Centre, highlights a disturb: learned of the attack when they vising aspect of the exodus of Hutu sted Cibitoke province in north-refugees from Zang, which has been provided by the come a fixed in regard days, Hutus see intersects with wounded surreturning to Rwardia have been a surrough authorities and winesses; on 22 October The victims, believed

in eastern Zaire were massacred in turn to their homes in neighbouring. hand grenade wounds. Some 110 a church in Burundi last month, ac- Burundi, where they are walking into a continuing Hutu-Tittsi civil war. The report, by the UN Human The UN said its representatives

The UN said its representatives

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to be Burundian Hutus, were among the first refugees to return to Burundi there was no massacre." when fighting broke out around UN refugee camps in eastern Zaire last month.

A spokesman for Burundi's Tulpaganda" from the National Council for the Defence of Democracy, a

Meanwhile talks in Stuttgart between 35 nations ready in principle to take part in a military intervention force in central Africa gol off si-led army called the report "pro- to a slow and confusing start yesterday. The talks, between senior military officers, are expected to stretch Hntu exile opposition group. "This is pure fabrication," Maj. Mamert produce a menu of possible actions through the weekend. The aim is to

for governments to consider, rang-ing from the 11,000-strong intervention force originally proposed to something much less ambidous. But

"By the end of the weekend 1 would hope we will have developed a full slate of options," said Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril of UN-authorised mission

aid to Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire and encourage them to go

But the voluntary return of 500,000 Rwandans in the last week has produced sharp disagreements on what kind of mission to send, if any. Governments have been unable Canada, which is coordinating the to agree on the scale of the remaining problem, how many refugees remain The original aim to was to escort in Zaire, their location and condition.



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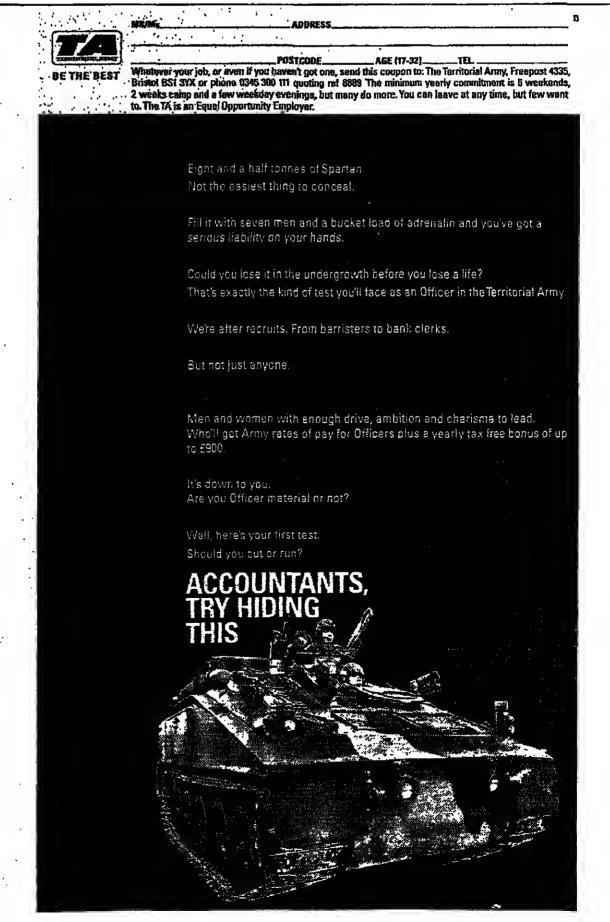
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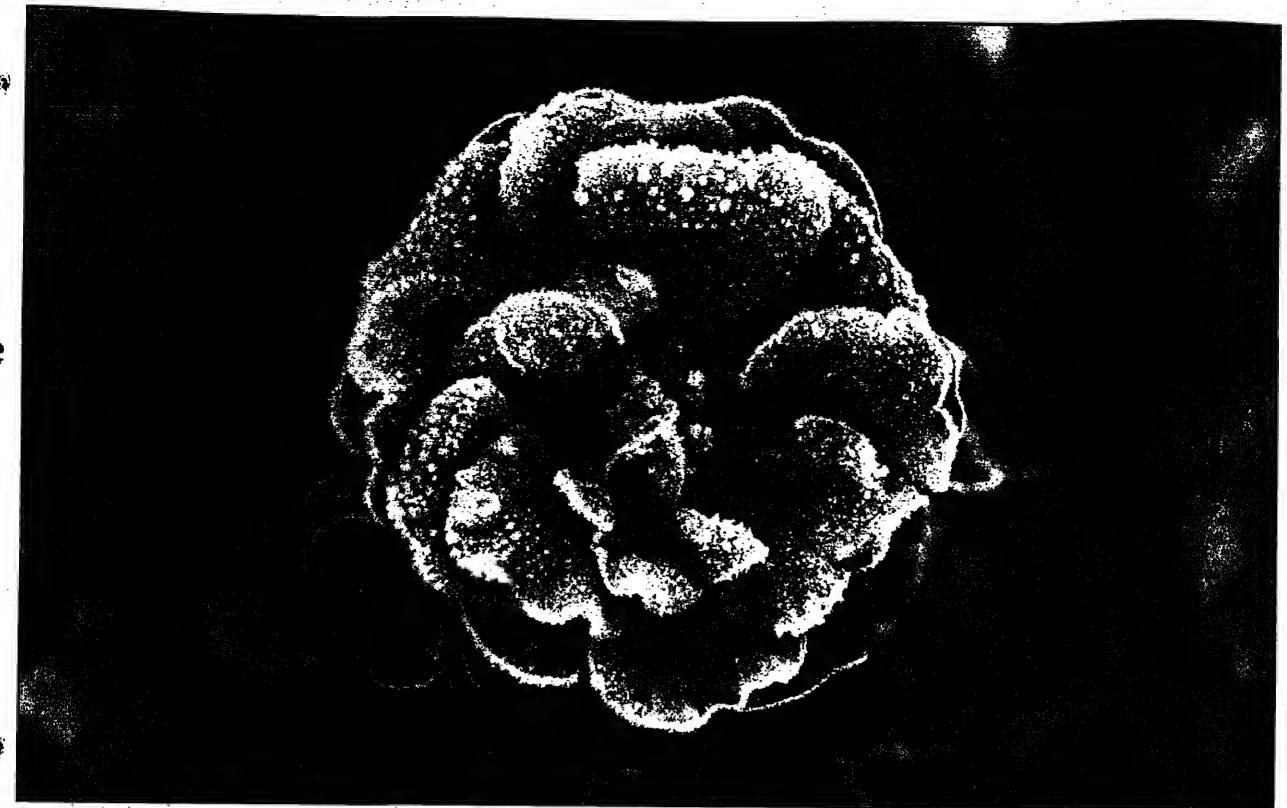
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The last rose of autumn, caught, delicately frosted, in the week's wintry blast. Taken with a macro lens and 1,000 ASA colour negative.

Photographer Brian Harris

# the longweekend the Independent of the Indepndent of the Independent of the Independent of the Independent o

The trains were late, cars broke down, everyone came to work damp and grumbling. You could tell it was winter. It was cold as well. The snow quickly melted into a drab grey and flowers that were bold and colourful the day before were struck down by the frost. Still, we can dream of sunny times in Antigua, mellow breaks in southern Spain and garner a little cheer with the news that even those ald Christmas cliches - ties -

can be a present classic.

interview

#### John Walsh meets ...Griff Rhys Jones The proto/lad will

be plundering laughs in a new version of a Ben Travers farce page 3

#### arts & books



#### Glimpsing the divine in Wales

Jan Morris on the Welsh poet R.S. Thomas, laureate of a people's torment page 6

#### travel



# The island of 365 beaches ...and Viv

Simon Calder visits
Antigua where, after
the driving, the
biggest danger is
the sun page 9

#### money



# Does loyalty buy a happy Christmas?

Nic Cicutti on the incentives offered by credit cards. Are they worth the big spend? page 18

Money & Homes . .18-25 Shopping . . . . .27-30 Crossword, TV . . . . .31

# Christmas won't taste the same without it!

We've got Christmas wrapped up: delight your family and friends with the best lunch menus, top tipples, a sensational cake selection and dazzling party foods. It's too good to resist.

ONJOH

#### **Smiling gold raiders** TWO raiders were get 25 years get 25 years

esterday for their part

in Britain's biggest David Tixler Price sen-taced tile sentences McAvoy 32, and car from South London had life.

tenced them at the Old and that would mean Builder Michael Bailey. The pair, both actually serving out rater Brian Robin confided to family and The gang got into the

#### Whatever happened to **Brinks-Mat?**

The moment: In the early hours of Saturday 26 November 1983, six armed robbers stipped into the Brinks-Mat warehouse in Heathrow, posing as relief guards. Confronting genuine security workers, they ripped off the uniform of one of the guards, doused him in petrol, and told him that if he did not reveal the combination for vaults containing the gold. they would set him alight. Once in the vault, they removed 6,800 Mars-bar-size ingots of gold, worth more than £26m, that were being stored overnight before being transferred next morning to Hong Kong.

How could it happen? The military style precision of the operation took everyone by surprise: workers in the warehouse did not even realise that the vaults' contents were so valuable: "I knew it was run by Brinks-Mat but I didn't realise that there was £26m in one corner in there," said one. The thieves' detailed knowledge of the Fort Knox-style security system allowed them to enter undetected. Once they had let themselves in through the front door with a duplicate key,

they took advantage of the disabling of the alarm sys-tems at 6.30am to allow security staff to get in to start work, Surprisingly, it is now thought that the robbers expected to find a mere £1m in the vaults.

The casualties: The gold markets were the first to suffer, Within a week of the robbery, gold prices had risen dramatically, ironically increasing the value of the stolen bullion by £1,100,000.

The robbers did not stay free for long; their detailed knowledge of the security arrangements alerted the police to the possibility that an insider could be involved. A security guard. Anthony Black, was questioned, and his testimony later secured the convictions of two of the gang - his brother-inlaw Micky McAvoy and Tony Robinson ("The Colonel").

A surveillance operation to track down the other criminals resulted in a policeman. John Fordham, heing stabbed to death in the grounds of the person he was tracking. Kenneth Nove. Nove was later cleared of murder, claiming self defence, but was jailed for 14 years for his part in laundering the stolen bullion. Other members of the gang which fenced the ingots were arrested and jailed: four of them, who together laundered more than £14m, were each sentenced for between five and 10 years in 1992.

Moments of subsequence: The gold has never been fully recovered. Police say that half of it was smelted and sold hack to legitimate dealers, including Johnson Matthey, to whom it belonged. Much of it ended up as expensive jewellery. The rest, worth more than £10m, was buried and remains undiscovered. However, last year it emerged that Kenneth Nove reached a secret out-of-court settlement in which he is said to have surrendered more than £3m.

As this Tuesday - the 13th anniversary of the robbery approaches, police still want to talk to Nove. Though he was released from jail for his part in the robbery two years ago. police are also trying to contact him about other incidents including the road rage killing in which a motorist. Stephen Cameron, was stabbed to death on the M25.

which it presumably feels pose a threat to traditional Christianity. Radio 4's The Moral Maze devoted its entire programme last week to the report and the wider issue of the human need for irrationality, be it

pagan or religious.

neo-pagan movements.

he Church of England has issued a

report on Britain's

Roman pattern of

occupation and

conversion, made

mission. When St

Augustine was husy

paganism central to its

practices he found. No

matter how eagerly they

revealed religion, Britons

remained reluctant to

What was he to do?

abandon native beliefs.

In a response which

makes Machiavelli look

ideologue, the Pope urged

"deliberating long about

the English people", he exhorted Augustine to

convert idol temples into

Christian shrines. The

like a narrow-minded

tolerance. After

embraced the new

I think the Church is being too modest in playing down its own role in perpetuating these very elements. The pagan magic it now deplores was in on Christianity from the beginning. The emperor Constantine, who started the whole thing rolling in the 3rd century, owed his conversion to a heavenly portent - a vision of a

flaming cross in the sky. Similarly, the Christian conquest of these islands, radiating out from the

colonising Canterbury and its surrounds for the new Christian movement, he specifically queried Pope Gregory the Great on how to treat the many quaint Ann Geneva

heavenly new pagans with a long history

would be more ready to come to places they were familiar with, and hesides, "it is doubtless impossible to cut out everything at once from their stubborn minds". Now there was a natural-born politician.

The resultant hybrid, as pagan sites were turned into Christian ones and given their own saints, persisted for centuries in church arehitecture and

wonderful things followed from this religio-cultural splice. The plough was dragged into the church for blessing on Plough Monday to ensure the growth of corn; church bells were haptised with holy water to render them powerful enough to dispel thunder, soil from the churchyard was endowed with magical powers; and for a peck of oats St Wilgerfort would dispose

Brigid's Well in Oxford is still considered to bestow fertility. Some enchanting customs, such as Morris

of unwanted husbands for

disaffected wives. St

dancing and maypoles, survived even the Protestant reformers, who used their destruction as stalking-horses to target the higgest magic of all transubstantiation. But the Puritans went too far in

and chopped down the Glastonhury Thorn. In many cases, Protestant magic was merely substituted for the old ways, as in New England, where the Bible was used to divine one's fate by opening it at random. I remember the surprise

the eyes of many when

they banned Christmas

encountering multiple deities in the house of an American Indian family in New Mexico. Lined up along their window sill was a sequence of gods: two Indian carvings, statues of the Virgin Mary and Christ - and a picture of John F Kennedy, the only one of the pantheon to merit a lighted candle. At the time, it blew my mind;

You told me the last

"Look, Charlotte," I sit

two times you rang."

up, "Charlie isn't here.

I've lived here for years,

and there's never been

anyone called Charlie

wrong number or he's

given you the wrong number. I'm sorry about

that, but please don't ring

me again. I still won't be

here. You've either got the

Silence.

I felt upon first now it seems the height of wisdom. After all, if the magic works why not coall week .

#### in addition

This has been a week of surveys. Thanks to the indefatigable work of the nation's pollsters, we have learnt, in the past seven days, who is considered to be Britain's sexiest MP, which TV advert is most despised, what proportion of dunkers would bother to fish out a piece of soggy biscuit from a drink and how many of us would ban homosexual sex from our TV screens. Adding all this to other recent surveys we are now able to offer a cut-out-and-keep guide to who does what to whom and how often.

Britons who love their country ...... 33 Find Bob Hoskins BT ads irritating ... Women who think Peter Mandelson is sexy .. Cats that are overweight .. Biscuit dunkers Dunkers who would fish out dunked biscuit from tea .. Call the lavatory the "loo" . Husbands who clean the loo . Men hoping for casual sex at office Christmas parties ..... Women hoping for same Men who wear same underpants Women disgusted by hairy men . Women who would rather watch TV Want to ban gay sex on TV. Want to ban all sex on TV .. Have enjoyed sex in a field Have been cuddled while washing the dishes . Have experienced dandruff Have tried cannabis at least once .. 20 Have never tried cannabis ...... Don't know if they've tried cannabis 20

We deduce that there is one cannabissmoking woman in Britain who hates Bob Hoskins, is married to a man who doesn't often change his underpants, and dreams of having sex with Peter Mandelson in a loo that her hubby has cleaned. Madam, you should be ashamed of yourself!

Last Saturday, we mentioned the allpervading influence of the number 42. And what, on that very day, was the first number to emerge from the lottery

harrel? None other than 42, of course! Encouraged by that success, we are pleased to offer this week's lottery tips. After deep research and rune-casting, we recommend that you avoid the following numbers:

1, 11, 19, 23, 33, 42, Anyone betting on these six numbers. we believe, will win nothing at all.

William Hartston

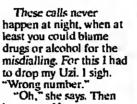
#### interiors. Many other people, he reasoned, earthly Charlotte and the freedom fighter

t's 7.45am and there's a thick layer of frost on the church hall roof. Buried hencath the duvet. clocking up my fifth hour of sleep. I'm leading a guerrilla resistance operation against some faceless hut evil Nazi types in the hills around Petra. t've just pushed a chunk of Nabatacan crow-steps on to a convoy of jeeps when

the phone rings.

I hate it when it does that. Telephones and ichels don't mix. For a mument I cast around the wadi to sec where the satphone went, Then I'm awake, and stumbling through the grim morning. Too little time to find a dressing gown before the Ansaphone goes off.

The breathy monotone of the Shires. "Hi," it says, "It's Charlotte, Is Charlie there?



hangs up. No sorry or anything just a dialling tone. Morning people are so smug about their moral prohity; it never occurs to them to apologise.
"It's perfectly all right.

Any time. Just feel free to call." I replace the receiver. Thirty seconds later, as the bedelothes start to warm up, it rings again,

"Hi, it's Charlotte. Can I speak to Charlie?" Look, Charlotte, you've still got the wrong

"Oh, is that -?" She recites my number.

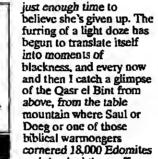
"Well. Charlie must be there, then."



"Sorry. He's not." "Well when's he going to be back?" "He won't be. He

"Oh, Has he moved?" "No idea, but he doesn't live here."
"Oh." She hangs up.

I dial 1471. She's withheld her number. I briefly consider a fag and a cup of coffee, then take the phone to the bedroom. This time, she gives me



Instead, the phone rings and I flail in search of it. doesn't live here",

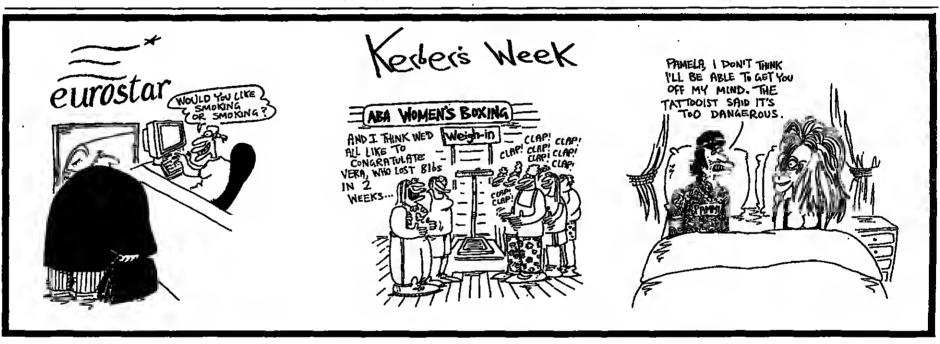


"Hello, Charlotte." There's a pause. "Can I speak to Charlie, please?" "Charlotte, I can't help

you with this. I don't know who Charlie is." She thinks she's caught me out. "If you don't know who he is," she says triumphantly, "How did

able to produce him. OK?" More silence. Goodbye, Charlotte." There's no point now. I'll never know if my freedom fight came out right. I find a jumper, start switching on heating. As I fill the kettle, the phone

"Look," says Charlotte, "Can you tell Charlie that if he didn't want to speak to me he could have just told me?"



Junction (A46 Dodington) and Jt9 Bris-

tol Parkway (M23), major readworks

with two lanes open eastbound, three

#### weekend weather

General Situation and 5-Day Outlook:

Pressure will be low from Scandinavia to the central Mediterranean for the next few days with a cold northwest flow over the British Isles.

Sam Coates

Today, rain over Scotland will clear away to the south as brighter weather and some sunshine spreads from the north. However, there will be wintry showers and a chilly northwest wind. Northern Ireland will see rain giving way to sunshine and showers for the afternoon, but with a cool wind, Patchy fog over England and Wales will lift, and it should stay dry to the south with some sunshine and light winds. However, rain will be moving south.

Sunday will see rain in the south clearing to leave the whole of the country with a mix of sunshine and wintry showers. Monday also promises some sunshine after a frosty start. There will, though, be snow showers to the north while rain or snow spreads into the southwest. Sleet and snow is expected across the southern half of the country

during Tuesday with sunshine and snow showers to the north. The cold weather will then continue through the middle of the week with snow showers. 5 43 3 37 7 45 4 39 2 36 6 43 2 36 9 48 5 41 8 46 6 43 5 41 2 36 5 41 Cairo Cape Town Casablanca Christchurch

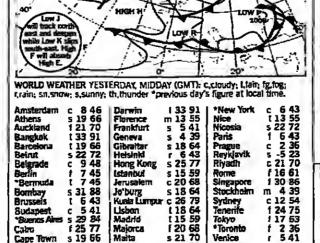
WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): c,cloudy; t,fain; r,rain; sn,snow; s,sunny; th,thunder \*previous day's figure at loca 133 91 m 13 541 s 4 39 s 18 64 r 6 52 77 s 25 77 s 25 77 c 20 68 s 18 64 r c 26 79 t 18 64

You'd have to look hard to find a smaller fare.

Contact your local travel agent or call for details on

0345 554554 OR 0345 I FLY BM

**Bit British Midland** The Airline for Europe from London Heathron: Available on selected dates and fingles. Subject to availability. Insect must include a Saturday might day, Passenge



5 7:45an AM HT PM HT - 12.64 7.1 9.37 9.1 21.56 9.3 5.25 12.6 17.49 13.1 4:10pm to 7:45am 4:03pm to 7:45am 4:00pm to 7:65am 3:50pm to 7:58am 3:50pm to 8:13am 3:56pm to 8:13am

running westbound. Waitham Cross (At0) and J26 Waitham Abbey (A121), maintenance work or both carriageways will mean slip road restrictions and a controllow at time Expect delays.

MI West Yorkshire. 147 Leeds (M621/A653 Holbeck), long-term roadworks and lane closures with speed limits down to Mamph. Expect delays on the M L M621 and Dewsbury Road, Beta geuse- ... ORION SO<sub>2</sub> Good Good Good Good Good Good Looking east-southeast at about 9pm on Monday 25th November, with the nearly full moon in Taurus On Monday evening, 25 cluster, scattered around November, the almost full Aldeharan, will not be so Moon lies in the constellation obvious with the Moon so close by. They will be easier of Taurus, very close to Aldebaran, the bright orange star that marks the eye of the

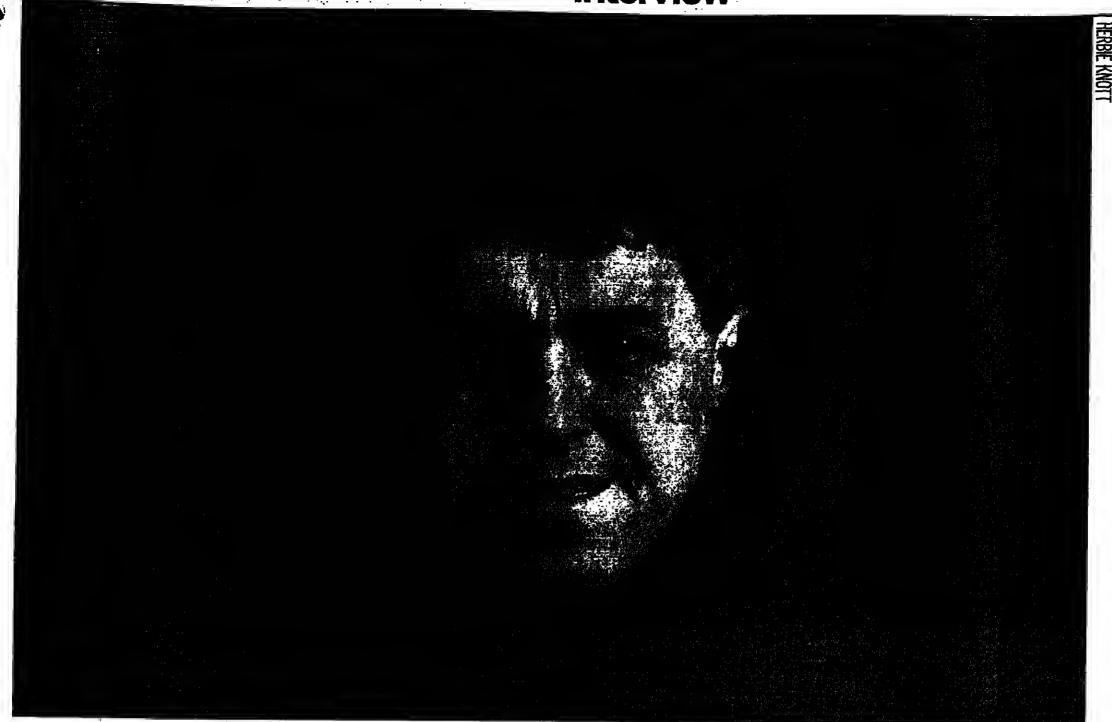
A giant star 25 light years away, Aldebaran ranks as the 14th brightest star in the sky, so should be easy to spot espite the moonlight. Mempers of the Hyades star

to see later in the week when the Moon has moved on in its monthly trek around the sky. Though Aldeharan appears to be in the Hyades, it is in fact much nearer. The stars belonging to the cluster are 150 light years away.

**Jacqueline Mitton** 



مكذا من الأصل



# A nerd-magnet speaks out

experienced a - I'm trying to pick up this gut curious dual sensation. In this further up the train...."

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11 11 12 11 1

19.5

bumourless martial building, I was waiting for my lunch date to appear and, to while away the time, was reading the notice board. I'd got to a helpful sign advising passers-by about the "Rules of Engagement for service personnel British twit - the unsmilling, authorised to carry arms and unstoppable anorak, deterammunition on duty in the mined to have his way, argue his UK. 1) You may ONLY open fire against a person if..."
Glancing up, I found myself watching, through a glass door, a borrible scene unfold in which frantic-looking man in a check shirt and a recidivist's haircut jerkily pursued a young woman around a chaise longue. Was it sufficient reason to consider opening fire? No, it was just Griff Rhys Jones rehearsing his new role, as D'Arcy Tuck, a gullible upper-class robber, in Ben Travers's classic farce Phunder, which is coming to the Savoy theatre on 2 December, and Mr Rhys never as extreme as The Young Jones is the last comedian you would consider sbooting.

He is, everyone agrees, so lovable - so droll, so cuddlesome, so engagingly dim, so boyishly manic all the time. Most of these emetic judgements come from women, who tend to want to mother the hapless Griff, but he's also a hit with a certain type of chap. "What fame has brought me, apart from money and getting a table at Langham's," he says in that steamrollered croak of a voice, is a lot of odd young men who à Manger sushi - with the ironic

tanding in a want to sit next to me on trains, caution of Englishmen faced

He shakes his head sadly. He may have become identified, over the years, through 10 series of Alas Smith and Jones, four films, Not the Nine O'Clock News and a string of West End corner and drive people mad; but he has no time for real-life nerds - or lads. I tried to float the theory that his and Mel-Smith's celebrated head-tohead conversations about gross male topics, from flavoured condoms to body piercing, ushered in a new era of unbuttoned discussion that led to Men Behaving Badly 10 years on. Were he and Mel Smith proto-Lads? Would be accept responsibility for loaded magazine?

"We have been accused of being at the yob end of the humour market. But we were Ones, say. There was just a general opening up, at the time, of what could be said. But surely," he says with a disgusted squawk, "loaded magazine is the saddest thing you could read. It's got that kind of desperation you find among men trying to have fun. What we're more fascinated with is the simple joy of two rather thick men trying to discuss matters slightly beyond their comprehension."

As we approach our lunch two lacquered platefuls of Pret

corridor on the I've become a nerd-magnet." with foreign foodie folderol first floor of the What do they want to talk to one steals a look at Griff Rhys Duke of York you about? Oh, a variety of Jones in his maiden aunt specs batracks in things Quite often it's Can you Chelsea, I come and say you're my friend Rhys Jones has made such a spectacular 18-year career out of playing silly asses and bewildered innocents, the unwary might wonder if be were himself a tiny bit simple, despite his Cambridge degree.
This theory does not survive

for long, as he dilates with profarces, with a certain strain of fessorial eloquence on his favourite topic, the nature of comedy: "In simple dramatic terms, all relationships based on friendship between men have an interdependency that makes them work: Hancock and Sid, Galton and Simpson. There's a Yin and Yang element. There's always one who's fierce and effectively in charge, who's always tripped up by the other, who is too stupid to follow what's going on, who is therefore a free spirit, unshackled and anarchic, because he doesn't know any better. It's there in Waiting for Godot too, of course..." Gosh. Pretty soon, yon're into swathes of theatrical history, chalk squeaking on blackboard: "On the whole, male-female relationships don't dominate cornecties -- it's nearly always master-and-manservant or two men working off each other". What about Benedick and Beatrice? "Oh all right, since the Restoration. After that, suddenly everything went off into male bonding. And women reverted, from having any independence at all, to becoming just figures the men can lust after."

His new role as D'Arcy Tuck in Plunder is a classic Griff role. "He'anot quite Bertie Wooster, because he's more nervous, and more complicated. He's someone who's terribly polite, but also very nervous, so be keeps saying terribly rude things to people... And - though it's an odd riff to hear from an accom-. olished farceur who was such a hit in Charley's Aunt - he is keen theatre, because I've been in so to emphasise that it isn't really a farce. This, you come to made in that direction have realise, is because he was fed a either been mistakes or just diet of Brian Rix's Whitehall farces on television when Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, young, about which he is scathing. Ben Travers, he says, but then we read that Brecht's by contrast with Feydeau or own production had been a Wodehouse, doesn't follow any of the rules comic characters are supposed to. "There's a voice didn't edapt well to, say, moment in his play Thank when Shakespearean tragedy. Doing the chap is with his girl, who suspects him of cheating, and he says, 'No, I love you Kitty, I love you so much, I can't explain to Lear's speech, because I can't you. I was walking home the see where the laughs are." Can other night and I was saying he not operate on a stage with-



line would only be put in by Travers. Feydeau would never

dream of it. Rhys Jones's sweetly confiding cackle is contagious. He is a performer who, when offstage, radiates a controlled frenzy of amusement, his conversation always a hairtrigger away from hysteria.

The press release for Plunder uardedly describes him as a "leading exponent of comedy" rather than either a comedian

Walsh meets... **Griff Rhys Jones** 

John

ing to people rustling in their scats, that doesn't seem to me to be very entertaining."

He was born in 1953 in Cardiff, hut moved, at six months old, to Scotland. His mother was a nurse, his father a doctor, and the shorttrousered Griff's summers were spent in the unpromising, but evocative surroundings of the "Essex Riviera" - places like Clacton and Walton and Frinton, the pub-free home of sev-

#### "Fame has brought me a lot of odd young men who want to sit next to me on trains"

or an actor. Is he becoming a real thesp these days? "I have a lot of friends who think of a visit to the straight theatre as akin to visiting the dentist. But it's strange that people should think of me as being in straight little. The few excursions I've either been mistakes or just haven't felt right. I did The which wasn't a success for me, complete failure..."

I suggested that perhaps his Lear on the blasted heath in

eral incontinence jokes. Griff's father used to take him and his sister and brother boating on a converted duck pond. It was all very Swallows and Amazons (indeed Arthur Ransome's chilhe wrote a school essay saying he wanted to be Charlie Drake when he grew up.

Later, on slow cricket afternoons at Brentwood School, he enlivened things by inventing "dancing cricket", in which his flannelled associates would field boundaries with elaborate entrechats, pirouettes and grand jetés. At Cambridge, he read History and English, but devoted more of his energies to the drama society, appearing in the University's legendary Aunt when, exasperated by the Footlights production three old ladies' chorus in the front your name over and over again, out laughter? "I miss laughter.
Kitty, Ki

group of 10 or 11 people ever criminals come from"; c) mensince we !: A Cambridge". The group includes Clive Anderson, Rory McGrath of They Think It's All Over fame, the hut the Sun once rang up actor Jimmy Mulville and the Griff's uncle at 3am just to ask; Hytner, although his original associates also included the present secretary general of the Arts Council, Mary Allen. Of the Cambridge crowd, the one be most revered was John Lloyd, later begetter of Not The Nine O'Clock News and Spitting Image.

"He was the most straightforwardly funny person to sit at the feet of and laugh, although he was too tortured to be witty. But if he was on a roll..." Characteristically, a mature Rhys Jones analysis rears its head. "Being on a roll was what you wanted from a funny person when you were 21. That's why Peter Cook never grew up: he wanted to be on a roll all the time. As you get older, what you want to talk about is life, death. art, views. You don't necessarily want to sit around while someone gets off on a roll..."

Growing up also involved getting married (to Jo. a graphic designer, 14 years ago) and having children, (George, 11, and Catherine, 9), acquiring vintage cars and witing sensitive sensiti timental articles about his desire to conserve the Essex coastline of his childhood summers, if necessary by the expedient of buying up whole towns with his vast wealth. Between this, the Arthur Ransome connection and the "new" 1928 farce, it's easy to see Mr Rhys Jones as probably the most old-fashioned comedian in the country, after Sir Roy Strong. He's never been exactly

alternative. And now he worries about becoming a vintage model himself at the gnarled old age of 43, as he watches wave after wave of new young scriptwriters, all trying to be funny for a living. They come, dren's classic is set there) - and they go, writing sketches for the amateur sailor now bas his Alas Smith and Jones and own 18ft-boat, a Drascombe departing. "We suffer a bit on lugger, to muck about in. At six, Alas, by being a little tired for some writers - they'd rather write for The Fast Show or Harry Hill or Alexei [Sayle], who's slightly more hip. We passed through a phase, not long ago, when we were like Deep Purple, you know, so old we'd almost come out the other end and become hip again." Apart from age, Mr Rhys Jones gets all embarrassed at a) praise; b) memories of some disgraceful episodes in his career, like the time in Charley's

tion of his famous namesake.

Sophie, the fiancée of Prince

Edward - they're not related

deeply bogus Welsh identity, cf

his Christian name. He admits to having inherited a few Welsh traits over the years ("like neuroncism, overreaction and defensiveness") hut most especially a determination to drink to excess. "I'm happy to say I have no control over my appetites. I could never have two drinks and say, Thanks, that's enough," he says. "The Welsh drink only to get drunk, like Dylan Thomas, like the Finns. If I started, I'd go on until I was under the table." He did. in fact, give up alcohol 12 years ago, not because it was ruining his liver, but because "hy the age of 30, I reckoned that I'd already drunk my allotted life's worth. Everyone is allowed a certain amount in their lives, and you can either drink it quickly, like me, or spread it over the years. I'm just looking at it logically." Did he apply the same principle to sex? "No. nn. nn."

followed it through quite to that extent." Was it true that, as Rory McGrath once said, he lived his life in a permanent state of crisis? "Oh ves." he said happily.
"I'm a crisis junkie." But how then did he seem so mellow and equilibrial? "Because I'm enjoying it. I'm the sort of person who likes to manufacture crises out of minor things. I never lost the idea that you have more fun with something if it's over-dramatised."

he laughed noisily. "I never

# David Lister's

#### Notebook

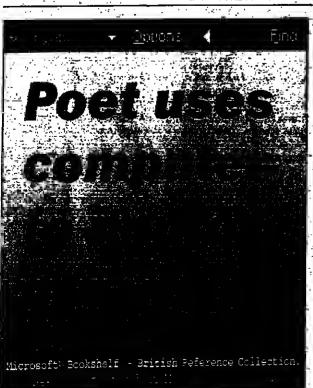
How the Lowestoft tourist board must be glowing with pride and free publicity. Sir Tim Rice, hyricist for Jesus Christ Superstar, lets it be known that be prefers a walking holiday there in attending the first night of the musical's revival at the Lyceum. If Sir Tim is the toast of Lowestoft. I can tell him he was also the talk of the aftershow party. Even the mrmally serene Lady Lloyd Webber was moved to tell me that she deptored Sir Tim's absence as it meant that husband Andrew could not go on stage at the end, and therefore the young cast was deprived of photographs with the pair that would have gone round the world.

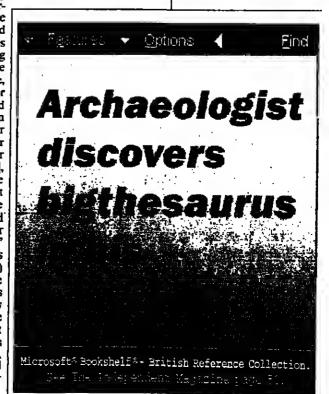
I might be able to cast some light on the reason for Sir Tim's staying away. Chatting to Robert Stigwood, the impresario who put on the original Jesus Christ Superstar, it emerged that Sir Tim might associate first nights with voniiting. According to Stigwood. "Back in the Seventies, Tim was a hypochnndriac. After every hig first night he immediately became ill."

The best sheatre of the week occurred at the Donmar Warehouse where Equity held a press conference to launch a report on the state of subsidised theatre. In the front row sat the secretary general of the Arts Council and two other spectres from her organisation. No sooner had Equity begun than the Arts Council team interjected and accused them of having their facts wrong. Could it be that the Arts Council had. just a fortnight earlier, published its own state-of-thenation drama report and did not wish to be nutdone?

Whatever the reason, there was a rapid descent into melodrama. Veteran actress Miriam Karlin leapt to her feet to accuse the Arts Council of "succumbing too easily to lottery Mary Allen pixoh pooled this. The actress and Equity vice president Charlotte Cornwell twitched with irritation until she could contain herself no longer. "Only now after 28 years in the business have I cleared my debts," she wailed. The whole sorry shamhles did little to publicise the plight of reginnal theatres. On the other hand, if they had intended to show there is dramatic and emotinnal argument to be found in our theatres, they illustrated their point hrillianth

In matters of how to win friends and influence people, Kenneth Hudson, director of European Museum of the Year Award and ndvisor to the European Union on cultural tourism is Reform Club, Mr Hndson was the guest speaker of the Cyprus Tourist Board. The faces of the 40 or so Greek Cypriots present turned a shade of puce as Mr Hudson lectured them on how the real way to improve tourism was to open up links with the Turkish Cyprints again. He also noted that Cyprus wine used to be "disgusting, really harrible," and was exported to Russia for industrial use. "However," he noted beaming at the bottle of red in front of him, "it has clearly drastically improved now". And he tousted their bealth with the new and improved "Cyprus wine", which, had be read the label. declared itself to be Reform





The turbulent poet: Jan Morris in praise of RS Thomas ..... Theatrical mayhem in South Africa......

Mario Puzo on the lure of Mob lore. By Tom Dewe Mathews

# Pasta with panache

ario Puzo's new hook takes up from where The Godario Puzo's new hook takes up from where The Godfather left off. So instead of just putting a horse's head on a movie mogul's pillow, we now have the entire Mob wanting to jump into bed with Hollywood. And just as Johnny Fontane, the Maha-connected crooner from The Godfather, reminded readers of Frank Sinatra, so Puzo's The Last Don will also provoke parallels with the Mob's real-life moves on Tinseltown. Not that Puzo himself will admit it.

"Hollywood's two wants for the Maha," growts the 75-year-old author

"Hollywood's too wugh for the Maria." growls the 75-year-old author down the line from his Long Island home. "There's too much money involved in the movie business." he explains. "Those Hollywood guys aren't scared of the Mafia, they're not scared of the government, they're not scared of anybody." But then Puzo, in a slow-talking, mid-Manhattan accent – which clongates Mafia into Ma-fia – complicates the issue by conceding that "the Mafia don't want to own the cow they're milking. They want somebody else to own the cow. Then they milk it for themselves. Otherwise it's too much trouble.

Throughout our conversation. Puzo makes it quite clear that this unbuly alliance between the movies and the Mob is almost as old as Hollywood itself. From Thirties mobster "Bugsy" Siegel's "offer of protection to the movie moguls", through to "the Cleveland syndicate's wartime suppression of [Hollywood] unions", up to "the Genovese gang's current control of porn movies", apparently every Mafia Family wants - or has wanted - to make Hollywood an offer it can't refuse. But this native of New York's Hell's Kitchen and long-time frequenter of the Las Vegas casinos doggedly refuses to admit to any personal knowledge of Mob shenunigans. The wily Don of the Mafia novel plays devil's advocate by insisting that the studio takeover in The Law Don is "complete fiction on my part. That would never happen in real life.

Because, as Puzo repeatedly insists, real-life studio chiefs are more than a match for the hardest of Dons. "It has to do with personal power. You have a great house, you have everything you want; women, Jacuzzis, cars, airplanes. So the stakes are very high. You're willing to risk more. I think the Maha is a little scared of that power. They can't just knock off the head of a studio all the time. It's too hig a jump. There would be too much of an uproar, Hollywood, after all, is very well plugged into Washington. A lot of money goes to Washington - especially during elections. So the FBI would take special pains.

Not that Puzo himself is overawed by Hollywood. Indeed, not long ago he told me that he had successively sued two studios for loss of profits on his screenplays for Superman and Earthquake. He is also disturbed by the town's pretentiousness and flashy style; to confirm his distaste he describes a meeting with one of Hollywood's most stylish gangsters. "Whenever I see a guy with panache." he says, "I get scared. Now, Joey Gallo had panache. He wanted me to write his autohiography. I ran like a thief. I told my publisher he would be The Last Don' is published by William Heinemann at £15.99

dead in six months. And he was, I knew he would be killed because he bad too much panache. More pasta and less panache is a good saying to remember."

For any follower of real boodlums in Hollywood, Puzo is a gold mine of good stories: "Ah, Johnny Don Giovanni Roselli... Yeah, I met him. He produced B-movies for Warners - ended up in a dumpster in Florida." He does, however, make one specific exception to ster in Florida." He does, however, make one specific exception io his intriguing dips into Tinseltown crime. "Sure, Frank Sinatra hung out with Mafia guys; hut whether he was really mixed up with them, who knows? Maybe it's because I admire him, I'm prejudiced." Unfortunately for Puzo, though, Sinatra has not returned the compliment. The legendary swinger from Hoboken has now hecome almost interchangeable in the public mind with *The Godfather*'s singer Johnny Fontane, and for this reason Frank Sinatra gave Puzo a tongue-lashing when they finally met a couple of years ago at the Hollywood restaurant Chasen's. Of the incident, Puzo has said, "The worst thing he called me was a pimp"; and perbaps it was this insult that provokes Puzo, during our transatlantic conversation, to drop in a story that Puzo, during our transatlantic conversation, to drop in a story that sbows Sinatra in a less than favourable light.

But like those cunning old Sicilian hoods in his novels. Puzo bides his time. In the midst of spelling out his latest hook's overall theme of the assimilation of the Mob into mainstream America - "those oldtime Mafia men, who got into Vegas when it started; they never went hack to Mafia stuff. Carl Cohen, for instance, one of the nicest guys, ran the Sands' casino..." - he suddenly interrupts himself. "Coheo punched out Sinatra." Why? "Sinatra had just lost his girlfriend. He was drunk and tearing around the hotel hreaking everything up. Carl came out and told him to cool down. So Sinatra turns to his body-guards and screams, 'Get him.' But the bodyguards knew who Coheo was, 'Not us,' they moaned So Frank took a Sinatra turns to his body-guards and missed. Carl didn't, though. He punched him out - split Sinatra's lip and knocked the caps off his two front teeth, Later on, I asked Cohen what had happened. And all he would say was, "That was soooo unfortunate." Such good manners," Puzo proudly recalls. "He didn't want to brag. But he was a certified killer.'

With friends like this, it's not surprising that most people believe Puzo is a Mafia "made man", Even Johnny Russell, the Mob-financed film producer, in his first meeting with Puzo insisted, "Admit it. Puzo, you're one of the guys." So how does the writer himself react to this confusion? Is he irritated? "Nah," he says. "I'm amused, because I'm the kind of guy that can't even kill a mouse. The only violent thing I ever did was sue those two movie studios when they didn't pay my profits."

But how would all his readers react if they knew that the father of The Godfather hadn't been privy to the inner councils of the Mafia Dons? "Maybe we shouldn't tell them," decides Mario Puzo.



And the winner of the Marlon Brando lookalike contest...? Mario Puzo

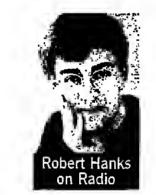
#### The wall of silence – and how to get round it

t around half-past one last As where is there not? As a sumwas interviewing David Philips, chief alone, talking into the silence, strugconstable of Kent and chairman of gling to keep a hold on composure the Association of Chief Police Officers, on the subject of banning knives. when the line went dead.

Clarke took a very brief moment to collect himself and then explained what had happened: "I seem to have lost all communication with him. And. indeed, with everyone, [A pause,] I don't know whether anyone can hear me at all. [A longer pause.] At the moment I am in complete non-communication with everyone... At the moment I can hear no one and speak to no one. [Another pause.] At the moment. I still can't communicate with anybody. I have been cut riff in my stu-dio. There's a lot of anxiety here..."

Tuesday afternoon, during The mary of the futility of the human con-Norld At One. Nick Clarke dition this can hardly be beaten: and meaning, while all the time not knowing whether the struggle has any point. Hone the prose a hit (and under the circumstances, it was reasonably well honed to start with: no swearing, at any rate) and it's practically text-hook Beckett: I can't go on. I'll go on.

What this rather gripping incident highlighted, aside from Clarke's coolness in the face of catastrophe. was the utter isolation of the radio hroadcaster, the complete disconnection from the outside world. Alone in a noiscless and (usually) windowless studio, headphones jammed on ears, the broadcaster



knows nothing but what he hears from a producer who is in turn tucked away behind glass, or down the telephone line. It's not surprising that some of them adopt such flagrant tactics to keep themselves from being spooked. Listen to the

infested night-time, or to Chris to the mild surrealism of his lan Evans and his breakfast crew yal- guage, the way that imagery sometering away, scrahbling at the times goes into freefall. One typical encroaching silence like dogs at the back door.

opening riff - a couple of weeks ago now; this just bappened to be the one

broadcasters react to this imprisooment in unforeseen and unlikeable ways - lapsing, like Scott Chisholm on Talk Radio, into solipsism. One of Chisholm's most intriguing quirks is that, when any current news story is under discussion, he magnificently pooh-poohs any version his callers may have come across: the one that he has read in his paper becomes canonical, a rock of fact in the that is Talk Radio UK, the man has stormy sea of opinion, simply by

virtue of his having read it. Possibly this detachment from

unnatural affection of the Jamesons, reality and the consequent absence clinging together to the goblin- of any points of reference contributes Not surprising, either, that some I managed to take down at the time roadcasters react to this imprisoo - ran like this: the morality bandwagon rolls on... it's swept up guns and knives, and oow the spotlight is on that evergreen, violence on TV... three MPs have jumped on the handwagon, each firing a broadside

at the broadcasters... Is this a case of mixing his mela-phors or just taking his cliches straight? Either way, in the public bar earned his stool, personally engraved tankard and bag of crisps. Prawnflavoured would be appropriate.

#### Gotta learn the langwidge

ike a thoroughbred borse, a television personality is the work of genetic engineers, the fruit of a human being's coition with a television camera. The lens's latest crush is on Ian Wright. the presenter of Lonely Planet (C4 Fri), a travel programme that gives you none of that piffle about tour operators and air fares. Wright works far harder to entrap than enlighten. He chats the camera up as if he's trying to get it in to bed.

If there's still such a thing as BBC English, Wright speaks what you could call ITV English, a multiple choice of regional variants. In Wright's case, it's a rubbish tip of glottal stops and Cockney elisions. He sounds and looks uncannily like Tony Parsons's kid bruvver. God, or the East End. gave them both a high-eved, wide-boned face and a 750horse-power outboard motormouth. Signing off from Greenland, he uncharacteristically concluded that "there ain' even words tha' come close", which felt like a con-out until be hopped off the helicopter. The chopper, with camera on board, pulled away and Wright shrank to a small speechless dot on a vast white expanse. Even from that distance, he definitely had a thing going with the lens.

There comes a point. tbough, when a television personality can get in the way. Gary Rhodes, not to be confused with his less telegenic namesake Cecil, returned with Open Rhodes (BBC2 Wed). It's as plain as mud that Rhodes's electric-chair coiff is a publicity stunt, but it does not impede his mission to give British cuisine the thumbs up - this week he was in the Highlands. Malcolm Gluck (is the surname a gimmick too?) attempted to do the same to English wine in Gluck, Gluck, Gluck (BBC2 Fri). "Greets you with a polite peck on the cheek," he said of a Cotswolds hyperbole, sounded like a slap in the face.

Rhodes and Gluck are food and wine's yobho tendency.
experts hired from the wrong was still the menticst role.



side of the tracks to cut the

crap. Nn wonder this week's featured language abuse is the glottal stop. It's even caught on in the costume drama department. In The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (BBC2 Sun). Helen's husband spent months on end up in town because he couldn't tolerate a wife (played by sarf Londoner Tara Fitzgerald) who hahitually mislaid whole areas of the alphabet. "May I no love the sinner and hate the sin?" she asked her aunt before embarking on the disastrous union. On one of his infrequent visits to the family seat, she enjoined him to "Le' me ta' my child." He promptly pinned her to the wall and tried to throttle the ennsynants out of her. She fled to Yorkshire, where ITV English is the lingua franca. When someone up there invited her to take tea, she said, it would "no' he possihuw": she never let T pass her lips.

Richard Rayner also retreated to Yorkshire in Trayels with My Camera (C4 Sitn). A Bradford emigre, his mission was to apologise to his family for writing horrid newels about them. When he got there, you discovered that, while they still spoke ITV, he had switched to BBC, usually a mark of television impersonality. Of course, television personality is not the sale preserve of humans. In Dallas Doll (BBC2 Sat), the gaping gobbed Bernard wormed her way into the underwear of an entire white, which, given his taste for Australian family. The family sheepdag had her number, and maimed her far more effectively than any critic could ever

do. Quite literally a bit part, it

THEATRI **Nottingh** Even with riv state of Robe

THE INDEPENDENT LOT

v taxi from the st house had to go as the drived switch on of the Ubristin place, My God, I Hung isn't Robert Lepuge, or i unweight mains, purhap since this French Caran town with Linner, the pulled from this year . I gremlin, in the shape of tech production title afti New belatedly unseile gests that it is not just Ler The aire folk sometimes of their art to constitution sion". With Lepage, it's

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ersculling scenery, an opt of Poverty is only one lor the technical dayab here ner into Hamier smoot? enth's bagger into inches Like Coleridge ("I b myself, if I may say so, heady clse, Lepage project spearian hero, "for I it ar that prevents Hamlet in der." asks Lepage in a p might say this isn't the m Hamiet's nature, but for because it's the one I sha of that is quite barking a a difference between an

So what son offer, spe fairly figuriant Lepageau i ing you look at things the is a nis production of t tana crucial mements, vohem's knees but not he guidence here, with the h has to be everythinds but the

and being weirdly passed

# Hair t

CLASSICAL

or the sales of a r Christophers as a it son's proceedady dramatifinding his interpretation response to the infliment, a of the oratorio's first act. recitatives and includgent the first-act arias suggestof fone (wet truth, or at lethe underlying drama of Sc onment and the subpagaple. But Christophers visi depended on as gradual c sion and the developm characters, clearly shared icent solo team and alert of

Opinions concerning extinction of that range by ligent singer of English (2) checked at least while C Rogers, Thomas Randle George remain in busines developed an attractively haritonal wond-quality o losing charity in the upper

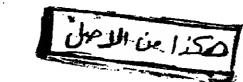
# Not ju

FOLK Guy C

Any Clark started life of with the still definite 1975, has thus the slippe cight alloung in 21 feats. T with a line line met lim b "man-with-no-name" amounts to a text-begg forking and majntmann. of songwriting reputation better known artists in Griffith, Enthylen Harri name, guested on his ally thing class to retu-coleyr and covered his material. the man seems deconered to role of quintessential cult

And a role it is les whill Sha legend Townes Van ? to turn up (m body if not in venue a year ago to gener. atmosphere Clark had slage. He oblightly donn; tallecal of his "hong leg





# Knee-high, short shrift

#### THEATRE Elsinore

#### Nottingham Playhouse and touring

Even with rivets intact, something is still rotten in the state of Robert Lepage's hi-tec Hamlet. By Paul Taylor

house had to go on quite a detour because, as the driver explained, the celebrity switch-on of the Christmas street lights was taking place. My God, I thought, let's hope the celebrity isn't Robert Lepage, or they'll fuse on the spot. An unworthy notion, perhaps, but one I couldn't resist since this French-Canadian theatre wizard is in town with Elsinore, the solo show that had to be pulled from this year's Edinburgh Festival when a gremlin, in the shape of a faulty rivet, put the hightech production into abort mode.

Now belatedly unveiled in Britain, Elsinore suggests that it is not just Lepage's rivets that are faulty. Theatre folk sometimes like to talk sentimentally of their art as constituting "two planks and a passion". With Lepage, it's more a case of "a million computer projections, an infra-red surveillance camera, an environnement sonore, a harness, somersaulting scenery, an optional mud bath and a passion". Nothing necessarily wrong with that, Theatre of Poverty is only one kind of theatre. But does all the technical dazzle here help take you on a journey into Hamlet's soul? No, it takes you on a scary

safari into Lepage's human limitations.

Like Coleridge ("I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so...") and just about everybody else, Lepage projects himself on to this Shake-spearian hero. "Isn't it an absence of hlind passion that prevents Hamlet from doing what he has to do?" asks Lepage in a programme note. "Some might say this isn't the most important paradox in Hamlet's nature; but for me, it's the only one, because it's the one I share." The puerile solipsism of that is quite barking and, besides, there's surely a difference between an absence of blind passion and being weirdly passionless.

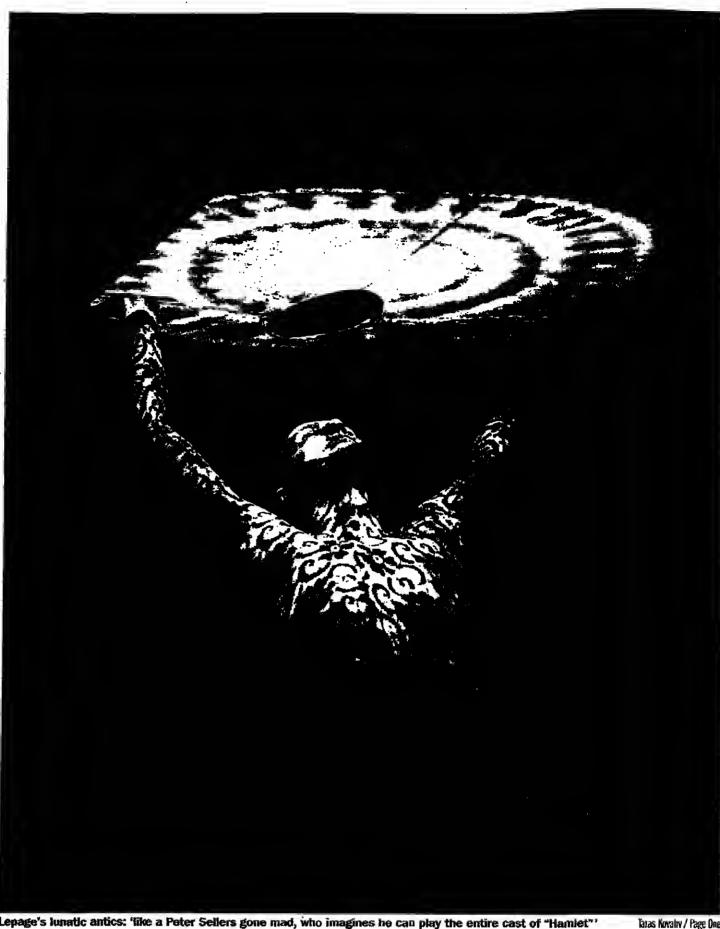
So what's on offer, spectacle-wise? Well, a lot of fairly familiar Lepagean tricks. His interest in making you look at things through slots and apertures - as in his production of *Coriolanus*, where, at certain crucial moments, you were allowed to see the hero's knees hut not his face - is again strongly in evidence here, with the twist that, because Lepage has to be everybody in the play, these apertures now

y taxi from the station to Nottingham Playhouse had to go on quite a detour because, as the driver explained, the celebrity of book shelves over the three screens), we see just the legs of the stand-in Hamlet on a veering library ladder, while Lepage as Polonius jabbers away to the knees. When Desmond Barritt scurried about playing both Antipholus twins in an RSC production of The Comedy of Errors, it was utterly in keeping with the nature of that play. But Lepage's equivalent stunts bere (coming on and off from behind a screen as alternately Hamlet and Laertes in the final fencing match) create a peculiar tricksy detachment that feels grotesquely at variance with the tone of this drama.

If you removed all the technicalities, Lepage's creepily affectless performance might put you in mind of someone who had gone mad and now imagined he was Peter Sellers, who had, in turn, gone mad and now imagined he was the entire cast of Hamlet. Playing a hero who has "that within which passeth show", Lepage paradoxically, as Sellers often did, gives you the disturbing feeling that there is nothing inside.

Watching all these hello-I-must-be-going, conceptually cross-eyed imagistic antics, with Lepage often both on-stage and backstage at the same time (courtesy of a film camera). I suddenly remembered the comedian Harry Worth's body-pressed-againstshop-window mirror-image semaphore at the start of his old TV show. Now that had a bit of feeling. The second-night audience with whom I saw Elsinore absolutely loved it but, with respect, I submit that the experience they enjoyed was more akin to "An Evening with David Copperfield", the magician, than an evening of serious directorial vision such as you get with a Peter Brook or a Deborah Warner.

A friend of mine made the astute remark that Cliff Richard's stage musical Heathcliff is already the video. Elsinore, if it had a bit more interactivity, would be well on the way to being its own CD Rom. At Nottingham Playhouse tonight (0115 941 9419); then touring: Newcastle Playhouse 27-30 Nov (0191-230 5151); Glasgow Tramway 3-7 Dec (0141-287 3900); Cambridge Arts Theatre 11-14 Dec (01223 503333); RNT, London 4-11 Jan (0171-928 2252)



Lepage's lunatic antics: 'like a Peter Sellers gone mad, who imagines he can play the entire cast of "Hamlet":

#### Hair today, Dagon tomorrow

#### CLASSICAL MUSIC Samson St John's Smith Square, London

or the sake of a neat review, it would be simple to present Harry Christophers as a master of Samson's powerfully dramatic music, while finding his interpretation wanting in its response to the introvert, reflective mood of the oratorio's first act. The lugubrious recitatives and indulgent speeds set for the first-act arias suggested the triumph of time over truth, or at least of time over the underlying drama of Samson's imprisonment and the subjugation of his peo-ple. But Christophers' vision of the work depended on its gradual increase in ten-sion and the development of strong characters, clearly shared by his magnif-icent solo team and alert continuo group.

Opinions concerning the imminent extinction of that rare breed, the intelextinction of that rare breed, the intelligent singer of English Oratorio, can be checked at least while Catherine Wyn-Rogers. Thomas Randle and Michael

George remain in business. Randle has with acute sensitivity to the text. George remain in business. Randle has developed an attractively rich, almost The telescoping and adaptation of baritonal sound-quality of late, without Milton's Samson Agonistes by Newlosing clarity in the upper reaches of his burgh Hamilton offers up a few poten-

fine tenor, or any flexibility. Here was a tial hostages to misfortune, oot least in Samson with attitude, memorably dismissing his venal wife Dalila and at his heroic best in "Your Charms to Ruin Led the Way". The second-act confrontation between Randle, wearing a black leather penguin suit, and Jonathan Best's robust Harapha might almost have been stagemanaged by Don King, a compelling contest between two vocal heavyweights.

Wyn-Rogers' expressive singing proved the benefit of a large, colourful voice, clearly focused and faultless in its production, to the performance of early music. Her genuinely bel canto delivery of "Return, O God of Hosts" highlighted the need for passionate singing in Han-del, even when romantic excesses have with acute sensitivity to the text.

the matter-of-fact delivery of Samson's death or his parting line. "I begin to feel some inward motions, which bid me to go". Handel's audiences no doubt drew breath on hearing the news of how the Israelite destroyed the temple of Dagon and ended his life; their modern counterparts, raised on Hollywood hiblical epics, may feel short-changed by the ora-torio's brief, second-hand outline of Samson's demise. Any want of drama here is ahundantly compensated for by the dignity of Handel's music, high-lighted with moving compassion by Christophers and his performers. The "Dead March", with its eerie mix of horns, kettledrums, strings and chamber organ, was raised here to the epitome of grief, a painful, very personal, yet pub-lic expression of the composer's feelings. Elsewhere, the choristers of The Sixteen matched the committed singing style of the solo team, contributing powerfully to this outstanding performance.

#### Not just Texas-fried turkey

#### FOLK Guy Clark Elmwood Hall, Belfast

Ouy Clark started life in a one-horse however ridiculous it must seem to him town in west Texas and, kicking off on a day-to-day hasis – and harmlessly with the still definitive Old No 1 in fortified it with wry witticisms, body lan-1975, has thus far slipped out a taut eight albums in 21 years. This, combined with a fine line in Clint Eastwood-like "man-with-no-name" demeanour, maverick, Clark is simply a better-than-amounts to a text-book approach to average craftsman who never shoved his forging and maintaining a certain kind of songwriting reputation. A legion of better-known artists such as Nanci Griffith, Emmylou Harris, Vince Gill and Lyle Lovett have fêted Clark's name, guested on his alhums on something close to rent-a-devotee numbers and covered his material for years. Yet the man seems doomed to play out the

role of quintessential cult figure.

And a role it is, for while fellow Lone
Star legend Townes Van Zandt just had to turn up (in body if not in mind) at this venue a year ago to generate an electric clark encouraged requests and got them atmosphere. Clark had to work on by the bagful. His guitar playing was rudistage. He obligingly donned the porous mentary and his actual guitar sound quite raincoat of his "living legend" status - horrible, but when it all connected with

guage and a little gentle sparring with the audience. Where Van Zandt is a genuine wild card, a vacationing-on-Venus maverick, Clark is simply a better-thanway around Nashville and always called himself a folk-singer anyway.

Whatever his generic preference, Clark proved himself a good entertainer, eliciting a warm response in a cavernous, charisma-sapping auditorium, largely used for Ulster Orchestra rehearsals. "Feels like a church in here," he mused. "Nobody throwin' stuff..."

Accompanied by his son Travis, whose superb, melodic work on the fretless bass added welcome textural depth to essentially simple chord progressions, mentary and his actual guitar sound quite

top-drawer material, the results were transcendent. His charged performance of debut-album perennials "Desperado Waiting for a Train" and "Let Him Roll" left their more polished interpretations standing Alternating between Woody Guthrie-esque "talking" hallads such as the truly heart-breaking "Randall Knife" (about his own late father and the process of grief) and more lightweight-sounding numbers in the swinging, Jerry Jeff Walker idiom, there was a combination of terrific quality and the odd turkey ("Homegrown Tomatoes", anyone?) in both.

Two songs from his recent Dublin Blues album - "Stuff That Works" and "The Cape", a song about trying to fly as a child and progressing to the leaps of faith necessary for self-belief and bet-terment in later life – were disguised in throwaway tunes and constructed from disarmingly banal couplets, but they illustrated beantifully the nature of Clark's particular brand of genius.





Blow

# With God where the cuckoos sing

Jan Morris praises the turbulent poet who loves his ideal Wales and hates Brummie vowels

Furious Interiors: Wales, R. S. Thomas and God by Justin Wintle, HarperCollins, £20

t's an impertinence to say so, but I think I understand R. S. Thomas. He is an undoubted poetical genius and an Anglican priest, I am a flibbertigibbet prose-writer and a pagan pantheist, but we have things in common. Like many other Welsh persons, from Dafydd ap Gwilym to Saunders Lewis, we long ago both reached the conclusion, or perhaps the device, that we could glimme the device of Welse. glimpse the divine in the matter of Wales – not Wales as it is loday, but a Wales with its language unthreatened, its landscapes unspoilt, its people still serene in their own beliefs and loyalties.

It was, in short, an existentialist Wales that we envisioned. Both of us in our different ways.

envisioned. Both of us, in our different ways, set our to restore it if we could, to protect what was left of it. We both became, in fact, what Justin Wintle characterises in an untypical moment of sneer as "Welsh nationalists, or patriots, or whatever else

they choose to call themselves.

Not only Welsh people, of course, cherish this enchantment – I have heard Egyptians talk of their country in similar trance – but in Wales it is perhaps more intoxicating because of our circumstances. Ours is a place of constant forment, form by doubt. Is it necessary to speak Welsh to be properly Welsh? When is violence, or even unpleasantness, justified to protect Welshness? Is it racist to want to keep English people out, when they are perverting the national character? Should we aim at an entirely Welsh-speaking enclave in the northwest, and let the rest go hang? What is Welshness,

anyway?
At one level of his art. R. S. Thomas is the laureate of these torments. He did not learn Welsh until he was a grown man, he writes all his poetry in English, but his dream has been of an entirely Welshspeaking society restored to its old simplicity. Win-tle skilfully and sympathetically explores this preoccupation, as expressed in Thomas's verse as in his life, and in doing so exposes many a nerve in the sensibilities of people like me. R. S. Thomas says things we are ashamed of thinking.

He detests the vowel-sounds of Birmingham

immigrants, and so do we. He hates tourism in almost all its forms, together with electric pylons amost air its forms, together with electric pytons and all manifestations of the game-show-and-lottery civilisation. He despises Welsh people who do not stand up for their language and their history, but fawningly knuckle under. He believes it is perfectly justifiable to be nasty about the English or to the English – if it will make them go away. When he looks through a Welsh window and declares the heavily outside to be "for the forward chases" not remote their farms and cottages (though beauty outside to be "for the few and chosen", not for the crowd that "dirty the window with their breathing", we know just what he means.

We are perhaps ashamed, but Thomas never is. He is defending not merely his country and his culture, but bis God. He is like one of the old fighting saints, born to martyrdom. If it is bypocritical for a Christian to live by saeva indignatio, then Christ was a hypocrite too, when be top-pled the tables in the temple. Thomas apparently prefers the word "Christ" to the word "Jesus": it

is more flinty, more ice-like. As one might imagine, he himself was not uni-



versally appreciated as a parisb priest, holding the forthright opinions that he did. But he was assiduous in visiting the sick and the poor, however remote their farms and cottages (though perbaps a little more assiduous, it is sneakily suggested, if they happened to he Welsh-speaking). His poems are often considered, especially by English readers, as essentially nationalist works of almost incongruous beauty; but English readers do not understand the nature of our patriotism or nationalism, or whatever we choose to call it.

Nor, I think, does Justin Wintle. His analyses of Thomas's art are percipient, and learoed, and often beautifully expressed, but hy the nature of things be does not share their sense of yearning and despair. He spends much time, somewhat

emharrassingly recalled, in the company of the sort of English-speaking Welshmen who call each other "boy" and talk a lot about getting pissed ("What an arsehole", says one of these friends about R. S. Thomas, "what a total arsehole"). He reports with apparent approval the responses of Welsb-speaking Welshmen who resent Thomas's more outrageous kind of patriotism. Wintle lives in Pembrokeshire, knows a great deal about Welshness and Welsh history, hut patently does not experience the transcendental sense of longing that is contained in the old Welsh fancy of "Abercuawg, where the guelstern size" are repirationally to

icism, often in line-by-line glossings of the poems, and fair and sensible when it turned to history or politics. But I disliked something prying about it, something almost tabloidy, when it set out to be biography. Thomas did not want a biography writ-ten and, so far as I can tell, Wintle has never met him. The book depends upon second-hand information and speculation, and this leads it into inquiries that seem to me distasteful.

How much was true and how much false?" Wintle himself asks once. "How much tittle-tattle, and how much justified resentment?" A hiographer where the cuckoos sing" – an aspiration-land, a dream, a Kierkegaardian Wales of our imaginations.

I admired this book without much liking it. I thought it was fine when it bore itself as literary critters "compared with what he has written".

As I happens I agree, but in that case, there is not much point in writing a biography that depends so much upon hearsay. Wintle seems to me dead right, though, in the order of his sub-title Wales, R. S. Thomas, God, I do not doubt that the course of this poet's art has taken him from Abercuawg through self-examination to the profoundest revelations of all, R. S. Thomas dismisses the idea of bimself as a mystic, on the grounds that his encounters with the divine have not been direct. hut filtered through poetry. But I do not for a moment doubt that this great and disconcerting artist, as he looks through that grubby small window and picks up his pen to write, has seen the unseeable. For to us pantheists art itself, like Abercuawg, is God.

**Donald Came** 

Nuremberg, The Last Battl

circulated the work of that self-styled "experts" who hiphysical evidence of the exte in the German speaking pa-lent his support and spoker

### The American way of death

D J Taylor on the literary star who died, as he lived, in the limelight

This Wild Darkness: The Story of My Death by Harold Brodkey, Fourth Estate, £14.99

arold Brodkey's story, propagated as much by himself as his many acolytes, is well known. The Jewish boy from the midwest heads for New Yurk, writes a handful of limitlessly promising short stories and then spends the next three decades living off his reputation. Part of this is to do with legendary powers of physical artraction (Brodkey's countless juvenile amours are supposed to have included a fling with Marilyn Monroe). Much more, though, has to do with an unpublished masterpiece – the subject of fevered press and party gossip - whose composition takes up the greater part of its author's adult life.

What follows is a savage parable of literary ambition. The Runaway Soul, finally presented to the critics in 1991, gets indifferent notices. To the indignity uf not being acclaimed as a genius (a second novel. *Profune Friendship*, does no betler) is added serious illness, belatedly diagnosed as Aids.

Brodkey's death in January of this year, assembles a number of fragmentary impressions from the last three years of his life. Hospitalisation, diagnosis, rural interludes in upstate New York, a trip to Venice, some valedictory remarks. In life Brodkey's subject was himself, and it wasn't to be expected that death would change the habit of a lifetime. This is not a cheap shot. Brodkey's mission, projected through 40 years or so of con-tributions to the New Yorker, was to prove both to neutral onloukers and himself that he was a great writer. The story of his death, inevitably, is a desperate final grab for the laurel wreath -part defiance, part bluster and nearly all narcis-

The sheer scope of Brodkey's self-love may come as a shock to anyone who hasn't previously witnessed the spectacle of an American literary lion preening himself in public. There is, for instance, his habit of considering people mostly

are the sexual look-backs ("I cannot find in memory a day in my life without som: er....

or other"), not to mention some over-cooked epigrams about the human condition: "Life is a kind of borror"; "History is a scandal, as are life and

One tries to remember, while reading this nonsense, that these are the thoughts of a desperately sick man dying from an illness whose impli-cations and – Brodkey being Brodkey – mytbical properties hung over every moment of his waking life. But one ought also to bear in mind that Brodkey wrote it for publication and that he undoubtedly regarded it as a testimony to his ideals and beliefs.

This isn't 10 condemn the resulting 177 pages out of band, or 10 ignore the inability of the author to answer back. For when Brodkey gets onto the subject of his rural hideaway, figures

This Wild Darkness, completed shortly before in terms of their relation to himself (bis wife gets from his childhood, shared confidences with his anything by behaving like an ordinary person, apostrophised as "My human credential"); there wife and doctor (an immensely decent-sounding and that even Proust presumably breathed the man named Barry) or some of the differences same air as his fellow Parisians. between Britain and America - whenever he can stop talking about himself in fact - there are moments of awful clarity. Watching part of a bird's flight arc, for instance, "I feel myself ahiver and swiftly break into clusters of flight. Some-

times the wind seems to enter me." At bottom, though, This Wild Darkness is simly another of the many 20th-century exercises in benefit of clergy. Its sub-text, baldly stated, is that one is - or abould be - allowed to do pretty much as one likes because one is an artist.

At times Brodkey makes this point directly, as when he tells his wife that "We are cowards and artists and are in flight and are and have to be awful people to get our work done", or decides that "a writer is alone, is a sacrificial beast and madman (or madwoman) and fool". To which you want to retort that no genuine artist ever lost

There is a grimmer truth on display here, however. That is the complete inability of this postmodern, milk-and-water humanism, this refined, urban, liberal sensibility, to come to terms with

urban, liberal sensibility, to come to terms with the simple fact of mortality. Diagnosed as terminally ill, Brodkey records "What was strange was that all sense of presence, all sense of poetry and style, all sense of idea left me".

But what is strange about not being able to bring a sense of style to your own death? Enmeshed in the world of Manhattan literary parties and New Yorker back-synthing (as which parties and New Yorker back-scratching (at which be characteristically rails). Brodkey lust touch with the notion of ordinariness at a very early stage in his career. Now that it is over, the temptation to mark him down as another literary casualty laid low by a particular kind of urban artis-tic life is irresistible.

### Magnificent Father mine, that pony does not come

Sue Gaisford constrasts surly sons and doting dads

Sons & Mothers edited by Matthew and Victoria Glendinning, Virago, £16.99

Fathers: An Anthology edited by Louise Guinness, Chatto, £16.99

Women tell me." writes Michael Bywater, "that the joy and delight in having produced a male child, something so different from them, can in mother wore a wig is little to be asbamed whelmed by the sheer horror of having produced...something so different."

These women could be right. Victoria Glendinning produced four male children of whom one Matthew has believed. dren, of whom one, Matthew, has helped her compile an anthology about having – and being – a son. Their two essays pro-

up 10 the pitfalls of the whole endeavour. First Citizen as a weeping old Mum".

ner compile an anthology about having – and being – a son. Their two essays provide uneasy book-ends to the varied often embarrassingly frightful accounts of joy, delight and sheer horror within.

Bywater is one of the formula and the sheet horror within. tion of complaint. They can't help it. As Bywater is one of the few sons to face desert we were treated to the sight of our

ley; it offers some bizarrely fascinating her wooden leg". Take Maurice Baring's experiences recounsed by Michael Seed her wooden leg". Take Maurice Baring's evaluation of Goneril's letter to Regan comercial. Thackeray boasts about his little fat the same of the same parents crop up in several. Thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several. Thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several. Thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several thackeray boasts about his little fat the same parents crop up in several that the same parents crop up in several thackeray beautiful that the same parents crop up in several thackeray beautiful that the same parents crop up in several thackeray beautiful that the sa and Phineas Foster, and some excruciating poetry by Spike Milligan and Jill Daw-son. There is also a fair amount of selfindulgent claptrap. "It has been incredibly worthwhile". Ms Glendinning enthuses. For her, maybe.

Infinitely better value, in every sense, is Louise Guinness's anthology of fathers.

This is a glorious book, every page offer-ing new delights. It ranges in time from Homer to Heaney, in expression from doting rapture to murderous fury, in scope from Rabelais to Peter Rabbit, in emotion from ecstasy to howling grief – and a good deal of it is very funny. Take

well remember, darling, that whon Cordelia was here Papa could not endure the sight of ber". Or take Piero de Medici wheedling a present out of his heroic sire Lorenzo: "Magnificent Father minn, that pony does not come."

Traditionally, reviewers of anthologies hunt out those entries we think should be there and grumble if they are not. I looked

eral. Thackeray boasts about his little fat plaining about their old Dad, who insists on tiresomely quoting Cordelia: "and you pliment. Hazlitt appears both as precopliment. Hazlitt appears both as precoemotions - and then finding, as Guinness remarks, that his scientific brain is fracremarks, toat his scientific brain is fractionally disabled by helpless tenderness. When, in a later chapter, we discover that the child has died, we appreciate that the Darwins "have lost the joy of the household and the solace of our old age".

One of the most pleasing aspects of the book is this new light that it sheds on men who are famous for achievements other

spring to wash his babies' nappies: Roo-sevelt having trouble with his daughter (\*I-can be President of the United States or pliment. Hazitt appears oom as precocious son and anxious father. Darwin is
a particular favourite, at first making
detailed antes on his baby's progress.

Can be president of the Ontice States in
1 can control Alice. I cannot possibly do
both."); Kipling despairingly scarching for
comfort after his only son was killed in the

comfort after his only son was killed in the trenches: William Temple noting glumly in his diary: "Holidays ton long."

Louise Guinness's two lather died when she was 12. In her introduction she writes movingly of her mentories of him.

A gentle, schularly, humarous man, twas the only Oxford undergraduate but have taken ballet lessons and played rugby for his college. She hads it impossible even to imagine any faults in him. Men, be says, mine motherhood as the fount and origin of life and its troubles. His essay struggles to correct the balance, His essay struggles to correct the balance, also by Adam Mars-Jones and Jan Dalandar a sible even to imagine any faults in him,

loge Shakespeerel by Anti the Merchant of Venice Shakespeates, never intrigued by the 198 Gregory Davan's Sol

Michael Ardit

Shakespeare's

but "the most improstrable c can a ffuffed line have prove remarks, "we've been loged In 1994, Sher and Derag group that visited South At sears in the emerging democ such as their status as an "ca single unviration to Sher in a great success and particula country for England at the Market Theatre, Johannest of West Albert inspired the following year with a Shake Their choice of Time Auto

agement, who would have leas for the authence and t of one renave, if pages pro Sher's previous theatrical a to used on the Lamihar than is barely known. There have this century: Poter Brook's rah Warner's with Brian Can reader's prior knowledge to

avid Irving has become instigation, a by-wore games in ferom of His refere to these who consput tors. He has spoken of High challenged historians to co-dence that Hitler knew of elimination of knoopean Je

Enoch Powell: A Biography

Powell served in government years and in the Cabiner of for a period of about six yearious "rivers of blood" april used those words) in April more attention, applied with

more attention, analysis, ach than any figure in British pul and Margaret Thatcher. He is credited with mak Minister and then unmakin anticipating the central ele-liberal economics combine alism - at least a decade be stumbled on them. He has ject of more biographics the ters, from Andrew Roth and flush of his notoriety to Pating celebration in 1989 So the reader may wonder why cially as Robert Shepherd a clit of Powell's own papers.

life.

The answer is precisely that is now the stuff of history, a isut Under the 30 year rule. is now the stuff of history, is in Under the Myear rule to 1964 are open. Year by see the rule allows the provious took pools of living memore explored. Thus the whole of tertal easeer is now exposed the Treasury under Feter The minating in their reagnation lie spending, later seen by I as the semial moment in the ctarism; but also his consideration (1964-2) as the must Health between Asciring Clarke Sinca is never held a ing to serve the horoust him moment in the server of the member I have been a member I have been a member I have been the Shadow Cabinet minute chart his granting allenation wider range of laures than a caplusing middless in a thickening theories (compounded by Fern Ireland) for the reat of health material for the middle now available. Shephen

hard material for the middle now available, Shepherd, a

# Blood and guts in Johannesburg

Michael Arditti reports on mayhem on and off stage as Shakespeare's shocker plays in South Africa

Woza Shakespeare! by Antony Sher and Gregory Doran, Methuen, £16.99

he Merchant of Venice was not one of Freud's favourite Shakespeares, nevertheless he would have surely been intrigued by the 1987 Stratford performance in which Gregory Doran's Solanio described Antony Sher's Shylock not as "the most impenetrable our that ever kept with men." but "the most impenetrable cur that ever slept with men". Rarely can a fluffed line have proved so prophetic, for, as Doran wryly remarks, "we've been together ever since"

In 1994, Sher and Doran were part of a National Theatre group that visited South Africa to hold workshops and discussions in the emerging democracy. In spite of incidental irritants, such as their status as an "out couple" heing disregarded in the single invitation to Sher to meet Prince Edward, the trip was a great success and particularly poignant for Sher, who left the country for England at the age of 19. They arranged with the Market Theatre, Johannesburg, whose legendary production of Woza Albert inspired the title of this mentoir, to return the following year with a Shakespeare play.

Their choice of Titus Andronicus posed problems for the management, who would have preferred Macbeth. It posed problems for the audience and played to 25 per cent houses. And, at one remove, it poses problems for the reader, for, unlike Sher's previous theatrical journal, The Year of the King, which focused on the familiar figure of Richard III, Titus Andronicus is barely known. There have been only two major productions this century: Peter Brook's with Laurence Olivier and Deborah Warner's with Brian Cox. So the authors cannot rely nn the reader's prior knowledge to sustain interest in the minutiae of

They compensate by concentrating on the events surrounding the production. Doran as director chose Titus not simply because it offered a whopping part for Sher as star but for its relevance to the climate of violence in contemporary South Africa (a photographer nn the original National Theatre visit witnessed a casual murder close to his hotel). As they come up against financial chicanery, administrative inefficiency and public hostility, the mood shifts from Shakespearian tragedy to the comedy of Evelyn Waugh and William Boyd.

The cast's enthusiasm can be excessive. The actress playin Lavinia (Titus's daughter) decides, after lengthy research, that her reaction to an off-stage rape would be an on-stage miscarriage in a scene in which she does not officially appear. It is enough to make even the most radical Shakespearian pine for the Beryl Reid "let's start with the right shoes" approach. The description of the technical rehearsals belongs as much to military history as theatrical record, with faulty lines of communication (essential props not found, the Lighting Designer fied), bush-warfare (sniping in the press), feigned attacks and tactical explosions (from the director) and the final push in vic-

The modern-dress production attracted great controversy in South Africa, above all on account of its accents. One sympathises with Sher's mother who wanted to show off her son, the English Shakespearian, only to find him playing an Afrikaner, one sympathises somewhat less with the letter-writer who "could not abide the excruciating experience of the ugly accents nf Southern Africa abusing some of the most beautiful language ever written"; one sympathises not at all with the critic who,



sance man: Antony Sher and Jennifer Woodburne in Titus Andronicus

objecting to Sciln Maake ka Ncube as an unusually complex Aaron, declared that he would prefer to see a white actor

The narrative is shared between the twn writers in alternate diary entries, a technique similar to the exchange of letters in Sher's novel, Cheap Lives. And yet this fails to create as effective a contrast as might have been hoped. Apart from their different perspectives in rehearsal, both their viewpoints and voices are remarkably similar. Even after those passages in which professinnal tensinn gives way to domestic violence - Doran describes the "conversation with the flying plates" in a way that would be anothema to Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray -

peace is re-established at the expense of literary tension. But then, although the book has two authors, it has one realsubject; Sher, He is the senior partner, the Renaissance man both on and off stage, whose drawings add a further dimension to the story. Doran's return to his home county. Yorkshire. is acknowledged when the production tours in England, but it is Sher's return to his home country that takes centre-stage. Indeed, the book is most effective as a documentary counterpart to the fictional explorations of South African identity in Sher's novels, spiced with a black humour worthy of Shakespeare's own, as when the mutilated Albie Sachs dryly remarks of the show; "It's not a play for amputees!"

### Judging the judges

Donald Cameron Watt convicts a maverick historian of meanness and myopia

Nuremberg, The Last Battle by David Irving, Focal Point, £25

elimination of European Jewry. He has privately circulated the work of that curious collection of physical evidence of the extermination camps. And in the German-speaking parts of Europe he has lent his support and spoken publicly at rallies of views. Some of his books have been major con-

challenged historians to come up with hard evidence that Hitler knew of, let alone ordered, the

of his own house.

Sut this is not one of Irving's better books. It is

Yet alongside Irving the propagandist exists Irving the indefatigable researcher, a man who has inguess to acknowledge the detailed work on the self-styled "experts" who have tried to deny the in the past been generous in sharing his enormous knowledge of the Nazi records with other schol-

avid Irving has become, in part at his own those normally referred to as neo-Nazis. Hence tributions to knowledge. Although disagreeing with him profoundly oo his views on the nature of the him profoundly oo his views on the nature of the ganda in favour of Hitler and his regime. He successful campaign to shut the doors of estab- Nazi regime, I have observed the failure of most refers to those who conspired to kill Hitler as trai-lors. He has spoken of Hitler as his hero. He has against him. Focal Point, the publishers of this lat-encyclopaedic knowledge and admired his capac-

is not one of Irving ingness to acknowledge the detailed work on the trial of the surviving Nazi leadership at Nuremberg in 1946 by the US historian Bradley Smith or by John and Ann Tusa from Britain. As with his book on Hitler's foreign policy before 1939, Irv-

ing's mastery of the German sources is matched by his complete lack of any frame of reference for countries judging were less than lily-white. There the policies which underlay the decision to stage a large public trial of the Nazi leadership.

In his effort to discredit prosecutors and judges, Irving misses the ironies in the Americans' Anglo-Saxon doctrine that offers the sole excepproven. If a conspiracy is proven, then the accused have to prove they were not part of it. This shocked both the French and the Soviet jurists.

There cao be nn doubt that there had to be a

can be no doubt that the verdict had been largely arrived at before the evidence was assembled. Yet with the exception of the Nazi anti-semitic pornographer. Streicher, a man so unpleasant of characadvancement of the notion of conspiracy — an — ter that the other detendants shunned him, the sen tences passed were richly deserved. Above all, the tion to the assumption of innocence until guilt is evidence destroyed any possibility of a war-guilt controversy like that which followed the first world war. Democracy in Germany was reborn, free of the guilt of surrender. It proved to be a much stronger plant than anyone expected.

#### The doom of the prophet

John Campbell follows a lost leader into self-inflicted exile

Enoch Powell: A Biography by Robert Shepherd, Hutchinson, £25

n a parliamentary career of 37 years, Enoch quite rightly concentrates on what he can docu-Powell served in government for just over four years and in the Cabinet for only 15 months. Yet for a period of about six years following his noto-rious "rivers of blood" speech (not that he ever used those words) in April 1968, he commanded more attention, analysis, adulation and excoriation than any figure in British politics between Churchill and Margaret Thatcher.

He is credited with making Ted Heath Prime Minister and then unmaking him again; and with anticipating the central elements of Thatcherism - liberal economics combined with English nationalism - at least a decade before the Lady herself stumbled on them. He has already been the subject of more biographies than most Prime Ministers, from Andrew Roth and Paul Foot in the first flush of his notoriety to Patrick Cosgrave's admiring celebration in 1989. So as he slips into history the reader may wonder why we need another, especially as Robert Shepherd does not have the benefit of Powell's own papers. This is not the official

The answer is precisely that the bulk of his career is now the stuff of history, as opposed to journalism. Under the 30 year rule the Cabinet papers up to 1964 are open. Year by year, like a receding tide, the rule allows the previously hidden crevices and rock pools of living memory to be systematically explored. Thus the whole of Powell's brief ministerial career is now exposed: not only his year at the Treasury under Peter Thorneycroft, 1957-8, culminating in their resignation on the issue of public spending, later seen by Thatcherite mythology as the seminal moment in the rediscovery of monetarism; but also his considerably more important stint (1960-3) as the most creative Minister of Health between Aneurin Bevan and Kenneth Clarke. Since he never held office again after refusing to serve Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Public Record Office has nothing more to reveal about Powell (except, perhaps, how later governments tried to neutralise him).

Second, Shepherd has had access to the Conservative Party archive up to 1975 (when Powell ceased to be a member), including most crucially the Shadow Cahinet minutes from 1964-70. These chart his growing alienation from Heath on a much wider range of issues than immigration, until the explosive moment of his Birmingham speech and his exile to the wider shores of populism, where he dwelled in a thickening missuarof conspiracy theories (compounded by further skile to Northern Ireland) for the rest of his career. With all this hard material for the middle years of Powell's life now available, Shepherd, as a serious historian, on Easter Sunday, 1950.

ment: the "River Tiber" speech comes three quarters of the way through the book.

Shepherd is steeped in this material, having covered much of the same ground only two years ago in his equally good hiography of Powell's friend and rival, Iain Macleod. The problem that any biog-rapher has with Powell, however, is getting into his mind. Powell is not an ordinary politician hut (almost uniquely in high-level politics) a true intellectual. There are plenty of highly educated peo-ple, but that is different: Powell is an intellectual in that he is genninely fascinated (and led astray) by ideas. No biographer will really crack Enoch Powell who cannot follow him into the three areas of detailed textual scholarship which have excited his intellectual passion over his 84 years.

First, from his schooldays onwards he edited and translated Herodotus, becoming Professor of Greek at 24: years later Lord Hailsham, whn prided himself on his knowledge of the classics, found that Powell could always cap him. Second, Powell fell in love at the age of 15 with the German language and German romanticism: Goethe, Heine and above all Nietszche. Hitler disillusioned him equally abruptly, hut 50 years later his eight records on Desert Island Discs were all German

(four of them Wagner).

Third, he is obsessed with minute analysis and interpretation of the New Testament, an obsession which Shepherd reveals he inherited from his mother (who taught herself Greek in order to clear up some theological point) and which culminated only two years ago in the publication of his hizarre theory that Jesus was not crucified but stoned to death. He has also taught himself medieval Welsh, written a history of the medieval House of Lords and published three volumes of poems. All this Shepherd duly recounts, but he cannot be said to make biographical sense of it. Maybe Simon Heffer (the next biographer in line) will crack it, but more likely the task is impossible.

The great paradox of Powell, a man who lives for paradax, is that his famously logical intellect is actually the slave of his emotions. He suffers Pauline conversions with the regularity of Mr Toad. Every few years his whole belief system is turned npside down by a new passion which entirely overthrows the old. Horrified by the Roehm purge, he renonnced his love of Germany overnight. Abandoning the idea of a musical career, he went to the opposite extreme and abjured music altogether. Militantly atheistic as a boy, he dramatically rediscovered Christianity (or his own highly individual interpretation of it)

He fell in love with India during the war and went into politics to save the British Empire. As late as 1954 he was still asserting that Britain without the Empire was nothing, only to reverse that faith too and turn all his powers of local demolition on ridiculing his party's imperial delusions. In each case it was not simply that he changed his mind, hut that he changed it so diametrically, so vehemently, so emotionally.

His subsequent brilliantly argued, but invariably negative crusades - against coloured immigration, European integration, nuclear deterrence, the American alliance and any hint of compromise in Northern Ireland - all stemmed from his traumatic rejection of empire and the adoption in its place of an impossibly idealised nation of English national identity. On every item of this hizarrely disparate checklist Powell had a case.

It was quite right that politicians should face up in the unanticipated social transformation wrought by immigratinn; and Heath was not can-did about the federalist implications of the Treaty of Rome (oeither was Thatcher about the Single European Act). But in every instance Powell's credibility was damaged, first by his having previously argued the apposite with equal passion and then by his self-indulgent taste for blood curdling overstatement. While constantly invoking a mystical Englishness, he has the very un-English temperament of a religious fanatic. He overlooks the true British genius for illogicality, compromise and muddling through.

He was most consistent, most prophetic and perhaps most influential on economics. Certainly much of what he was mocked for advocating in the 1960s - free markets, privatisation, limited government - became reality in the 1980s (not only in Britain, but around the world). But even here he did not practice his own principles. As Minister of Health, he not only planned the most amhitious hospital programme in the history of the NHS, but enforced Selwyn Lloyd's incomes policy against the nurses with a ferocious rigidity which

appalled his colleagues.

History will remember Enoch as an ascetic halfmad hermit forever prophesying national doom at the hands of Pakistanis, Americans, Eurocrats and Irish (abetted by the treacherous Foreign Office). He deserves some credit as a guru of market economics, John the Baptist to Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher. But he destroyed most of that credit by his loony extremism on other subjects. Robert Shepherd has written a first class account of an extraordinary career. But, when the dazzling detonations of Powell's pyrotechnics have faded, all that remains is a whiff of sulphur.

#### In next week's books pages

Books of the Year from Malcolm Bradbury. Barhara Cartland. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, Roy Foster, Penelope Fitzgerald. Jan Morris, Ned Sherrin, D J Taylor, and Barbara Trapidn. Plus Charles Nicholl on Malcolm Lowry's Letters, Rohin Cook on the Literary Companion to Parliament and John Campbell on Henrik Ibsen.



Festive spirits: a 12-page guide to seasonal recipes flavoured with alcohol from Britain's top chefs. Plus, Richard Ehrlich and panel test 25 bottles of bubbly and choose their five favourites

A frieod of Magaret Thatcher, Rupert Murdoch and the Queen Mum, how far does Lord Wyatt of Weeford's influence stretch? Or is he just good at parties? Geraldine Bedell



Michael Flatley and 'Riverdance' turned Irish dancing into a global industry. Then everything turned sour. Both sides of the Riverdance row tell their story for the first time to Matthew Sweet

THIS WEEKEND'S

By Christopher Hirst and Lucasta Miller

The Faber Book of Pop edited by Hanif Kureishi and Jon Savage (Faber, £14.90) Though it runs to 860 large pages, this great lump of a book contains remarkably little good writing about pop (Stanley Booth on the Stones and Michael Braun on the Beatles are notable exceptions.) Unfathomably. the editors include a fourpage gripe by Paul Johnson from 1964, but Leiber and Stoller, pop's finest song

writers, only appear in one passing reference. Similarly. there are extended extracts from such well-known popsters as Norman Mailer, Joan Didion and William Rees-Mogg but nothing from lan Hunter's acclaimed Diary of a Rock Star or George Melly's incomparable Owning Up.

Harvest of the Culd Months by Elizabeth David (Penguin, £151 Though bearing the imprint of the "Penguin Cookery Library", it is hard to imagine anyone using this learned history of frosty foodstuffs to whip up a dinner-party finale. Mrs David notes that ices first emerged in the Florentine Renaissance (handy for hiding poisons) and Louis XIV was fond of a sorbet, while excellent Russian icecream, made from eggs and cream, was available even in the mid-Sixties. The patronsaint of foodies shows an occasional frostiness herself. remarking on the rarity of ice-cubes in Italy. "The Tuscan addiction to ice is a thing of the past."

The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers edited by Barbara Reynolds (Sceptre, £7.99) Charting her progress from jolly hockey-sticks schoolgirl to celebrated author of detective fiction, these letters take Dorothy L. Sayers up to the age of 37. The writing is energetic and observant but there are no emotional outpourings here. So stiff is Sayer's upper lip that when confessing to having given birth in secret to an illegitimate son, her attitude owards the "little char (then three weeks old) seems frighteningly unfeeling: "it doesn't do to nurse him or pet him too much, or he'll keep you at it all day and night. He's accustomed to be stuck in hed when he yowls and taken no notice of."

tmagining Characters: Six Conversation about Women from jilted lovers Writers by A S Byatt and Ignes Sodre (Vintage, £7.99) The author of *Possession* joins forces with psychoanalyst Ignes Sodre in a series of gossipy Susie Boyt listens to family secrets discussions about classic novels. Now that literary theory has become the orthodoxy, it's refreshing to find a couple of intelligent critics who take such pleasure in talking about the characters in books as though they were real people. The chosen texts are Jane Austen's Mansfield Purk, Charlotte Brontë's Villette, and George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, plus novels by Willa Cather, Iris Murdoch and Toni Morrison. Though intellectually flawed in some of its assumptions. this is enjoyable lit crit. jargon-free and bursting with

Misogynies by Joan Smith (Vintage, £6,99) Originally published in 1989, Joan Smith's incisive collection of essays has lost none of its punch - in fact, it is fast becoming a feminist classic. Whether she's discussing the patriarchal bias of Ancient Historians (she rescues Catullus's girlfriend Lesbia from their donnish spite) or the sexist assumptions behind such quintessential Eighties movies as Jagged Edge and Futal Attraction. Smith approaches her subjects with a hlend of intelligence, polemicism and humour. Her literary criticism is spot-on.

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The specific details of tombs - the inscriptions souvenirs and photographs, flowers and wreaths placed on the graves, the wrought iron and stained glass, as well as all the sculpture - are what I call traces of immortality." David Robinson spent two years photographing the romantically wistful, often bizarre, memorial stones erected to commemorate the departed in cemeteries all over Europe. In Passy, he encountered this stone greyhound, listening for the return of the Beauregard family. Other pictures show weeping angels, a stone dinner party in full swing and a choir of banjo-strumming cherubs. The result, Beautiful Death, published by Penguin Studio (£20), with a foreword by bestselling novelist, Dean Koontz, is an eccentric, occasionally rather grim reminder, of the fine and private place, and its less private accoutrements, that wait us all.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID ROBINSON

# Episodes of casualty

Hugo Barnacle regrets an excessive body count

The Night in Question by Tobias Wolff, Bloomsbury, £15.99

Household hints

Selected Stories by Alice Munro, Chatto, £16.99

he 23 tales in Alice Munro's latest book.

the last 30 years of this distinguished

are all drawn from collections that span

Canadian writer's career. Many of the stories

are built around quiet and only slightly out of

the ordinary events. They almost all involve

the kind of daily struggles that family life

entails when it is at its most poignant.

In "Walker Brothers Cowboy" we're shown a young country girl's view of her failing travelling salesman father as he takes her and her

younger brother on an innocent visit to a

woman who is obviously an old flame.

Another story shows a woman grappling with feelings and memories as she visits her

father in hospital and learns that he has not long to live. "The Progress of Love" has at

its heart a daughter's helief that the most

powerful expression of love she had ever wit-

nessed was the time her father did not pre-

vent her impoverished mother setting fire to

\$3000, a legacy from the mother's own

Many jitted women feature here: "I had my cake haked...I was in my wedding dress reveals Aunt Dodie in "The Ottawa Valley".

Helen Louise in "Postcard" whose long-time

boyfriend returns from a family holiday mar-

ried to someone else, finds herself feeling for

the first time in their romance that she wanted to reach out my hands and touch you."

The drama often stems from a complex shift-

ing of sensibilities in the characters, and from

their growing awareness of the weight of the

secrets they hold.

Many of Munro's stories end with the

appearance of an important and clear truth

that seems surprising, but often lets us know

that the story was about something slightly dif-ferent from what we thought. Because of this,

they often close on a tantalising note, ending

with so much potential for future meaning that

it seems as though the author leaves the story

just when things that would deeply affect the

lives of its characters have come into play. I

suppose at these points I wished one or two

of them had turned into novels.

detested father.

ohias Wolff is writer-in-residence at Syracuse University in New York State. This is surprising. Syracuse, you'll recall, is the place where the English department is so politically correct that the phone book is a set text while Shakespeare study is optional. Why on earth have they hired a distinguished short-story writer like Wolff instead of some crackhead graffiti artist? Perhaps one of those wealthy foundations, whom Wolff thanks for their support in a prefa-tory note to his new collection, had some say in the matter.

At any rate it is a job you might prefer to avoid if you made much in the way of normal commercial gain from writing. Similarly the narrator of the first story here, "Mortals", having published "a few stories in literary journals that nobody read, including me", becomes a newspaper obituarist. "After four months of this duty I was full of the consciousness of death.

knew a secret nobody else had even begun to suspect."

As it happens, our man gets the sack for writing an ohit on someone who phones in the news of his own death for reasons of vanity and then complains so that no one will guess at his suhterfuge. Elsewhere in the collection, though, actual unexaggerated demises are a shade too prevalent, almost as if a morbid snobhery were indeed at work. A novel can include death and still be about much else besides, but a death in a short story becomes the domi-nant, shaping force.

In "Flyboys", two ingenious small boys dig their friend's stepfather's

pickup out of some mud when it gets bogged down. Looming over this account, for no terrifically apparent purpose, is a Salingeresque recollection of the friend's wonderfully gifted. motorbike years before.

need for them.

incompatible.

"Material" and "Friend of my Youth", both

of which show Munro creating situations

which are not only fully imagined and com-pletely realised but interesting in every

aspect, giving the impression that if they hadn't been written there would he a real

In "Material" a woman takes us back to an

apartment she lived in with her first husband,

the writer. Hugo Johnson, where her role was

"to throw herself between him and the world."

She tells us all about Dotty, the woman who

lived downstairs who was a prostitute, and

whom she grows to value as a friend. One

night her husband's refusal to switch on a

water pump during a storm results in the flooding of Dotty's rooms, which seems

unspeakably cruel to his wife. Although she

might have taken responsibility for turning on the pump herself, "as a patient, realistic

woman, a really married woman would have

done", she does not, and this failure on both

of their parts leads to a marriage guidance counsellor who directly pronounces them

written a story about Dotty, in which their slat-

ternly, oppressed neighbour is 'lifted out of life and held in the light, suspended in the

marvellous clear jelly that Hugo has spent all his life learning how to make." She is greatly

touched and during dinner with her present

husband, Gabriel, and her daughter decides to write Hugo a letter to say so. Yet when she

starts to write, the words that come out are

quite different: "This is not enough Hugo. You

think it is, but it isn't. You are mistaken, Hugo."

Although Hugo's story seems to bave love at its heart, as it enobles their poor neighbour

and helps her modest life "pass into art", what

is this worth compared to saving her things

Gabriel's respect for her unhappiness sud-denly distinguishes him, and her earlier won-

dering about whether it was merely his

Romanian accent that made her fall for him

from being ruined by rain?

f them had turned into novels.

evaporates and is replaced by something much more solid and enduring.

Years later, she finds her ex-husband has



Tobias Wolff: "morbid" ...

off, smugly certain the message was meant for another man in the battalion who shares the same name and mail all the time, and now they've It soured me. It puffed me up with vate is told his mother has died and morbid snobbery, the feeling that I given compassionate leave. He sets till leaving camp he realises "a simmouth shut, "a book critic known for economical prose.

die." And we are rather led to assume that in fact she has.

for remarrying after his father was cliched use of tough-guy language. boiled to death in a bizarre accident. Probably in life he'd be pistol-'Casualty" deals with conscripts in Vietnam, one of whom, irked by a new officer and sarcastic by nature; keeps volunteering for dangerous duty: "Love to.... Really, sir? Can 1?"And keeps getting sent, since the officer has no sense of humour.

Obviously, with just a few weeks of his tour left, the wisecracker has to get killed, but to make things still more tronic Wolff has it happen while he's on routine duty in a supposedly safe area. This creaks ever so slightly. It ought to creak like a falling redwood, but Wolff's writing is measured and deft enough to muffle the effect.

thing of a giveaway title, one can't But there are several others which In "The Other Miller", an army pri- screwed this up." He is happy to help feeling - there's another char- also repay in spades the minimal

ple truth. His mother is also going to the weary, elegant savagery with which he dispatched almost everyhat in fact she has.

Miller is a present-day volunteer, self in the middle of a bank robbery who signed up to punish his mother and taunts the raiders for their whipped but bere, of course, he gets shot, and dies recalling the poetic grammatical slip a friend once made during a basehall game.

The best stories seem to be the

non-death ones dealing with early youth: "Smorgasbord", a prep-school story with an acutely rendered adolescent sense of "pure possibility"; and "Powder", in which a father dri-ves through snowdrifts to deliver his son to his tetchy estranged wife on time and so save his access rights. "Like a speedboat, only better", thinks the son. "You can't go down-hill in a boat... if you haven't driven In "Bullet in the Brain" - some- fresh powder, you haven't driven

#### Sexual intercourse began in 1967

Patricia Craig watches the green turn blue

The Irish Eros edited by David Marcus, Gill & Macmillan, £14.99

Ourely erotic writing does not come nat-urally to the modern Irish" wrote Vivian Mercier in 1962, in The Irish Comic Tradition. He felt impelled to add that readers might well regard that remark as the greatest understatement in his entire book. It wasn't a new perception. Elizabeth Bowen, in her introduction to the 1946 edition of Sheridan Le Fanu's Uncle Silas, had commented on the innate sexlessness of Irish literature. Even major writers (such as Flann O'Brien) either shied away from the topic, or approached it very gingerly. Catholic puritanism was largely to blame for this state of affairs, or non-affairs. The Irish Censorship Board ensured the sup-pression of everything it lumped together under the heading of "Evil Literature". Evil literature, as is well known, included most of

the riches of mid-20th-century Irish writing.
David Marcus reminds us in his introductory note to this anthology that, with the 1967 Censorship of Publications Bill, "thousands of books were automatically unbanned. Irish readers then experienced something "akin to multiple literary orgasm with virtually no foreplay." Along with other freedoms in the social sphere, in other words, exposure to sex on the page perhaps came too suddenly and went to the nation's head. Now, 30 years on, the time seems right to assess the partial sec-

ularisation and eroticisation of Irish society. Hence The Irish Eros . It's a good idea, but there are two basic ways of tackling the subject and neither has recommended itself to David Marcus. It would make sense to confine selections to the period beginning in 1967, to show how things have altered in the field of fornication. On the other hand, you might cover the whole spectrum of Irish writing to indicate the subversive strain of sexuality which persisted in the face of the most rigorous repression. This anthology goes back to the 17th century, with one or two translations from the Irish, and it includes Thomas Moore and Richard Brinsley Sheridan; but these are just nods to comprehensiveness.

The emphasis falls strongly on the 20th-century and in particular, on recent writing. David erotic writing,

Marcus has also - unwisely, I think - opted for completeness in all his choices; he insists on the whole poem or story, and this brings about a rather patchy look. The inclusion of excerpts would have made for a much more complex and richer book. As it is, you are struck even more forcibly than with most anthologies by the omissions.

There is nothing from Brian Kerriman's riproaring "The Midnight Court" of 1790 (of which, to cap it all, David Marcus is one of the translators), with its age-old woman's complaint "How can I lie in a lukewarm bed/With all the thoughts that come into my head?" In the present century there's no MacNeice or Austin Clarke, no George Moore or William Trevor, no Mahon, Longley, Muldoon (although he gets in as a translator of Nuala (although he gets in as a translator of Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill), no McGuckian or O'Searcaigh: and these are just the first names that spring to mind. John Montague is in, but not "The Siege of Mullingar", which surely puts its finger on what the anthology is about. What you notice about the including even

the most up-to-date, is the continuing intrusion of Catholicism into Irish life, whether it's treated as a force to be repudiated or merely taken for granted. Priests and nuns, though, are now allowed to assert their right to sexual fulfilment, along with everyone else, as in the stories by John McGahern and Honor Tracy. (The latter, too, alerts us to the fact that in Dublin you can't get up to anything with-out half your acquaintances spotting you at it). Ronan Sheehan's comic piece, "A Church and a Modern World", about a gauche young altar boy at a parish social desperately embracing chastily, shows how little has changed, in some respects, in the last 60-odd years. There's even

an instance (in Kevin Casey's story) of an erring girl being denounced from the pulpit, Many of the individual contributions here are cogent or illuminating or even mildly racy. But they don't add up to a denial of Vivian Mercier's observation. On the evidence presented, you have to conclude that the modem Irish still haven't got the hang of purely



Beowulf (S5S? AD) by Anonymous

Plot: Beowulf is an Angle-Saxon folk epic set in Scandinavia, Hrothgar, leader of the Scyldings decides to build a mead-hall. Here warriors hang out, tell tales and get drunk. A relative of Cain, Grendel. decides to spuil the fun, crashes the party and eats the guests. Berwull comes to the rescue. He lies in wait for the mad troll and, after a bruising punch-up, Grendel slinks home, partially dismembered. Grendel's mother turns up, none too pleased, Snatching a warrior, she bolts for her swamp where Grendel is alive, but ailing. Beowulf takes off for the mere. He dives in and kills both Grendels after a struggle. Everyone returns to the mead-hall for more boozing and beesting. Fifty years pass. Beowulf has ruled the Geats wisely but his people are harassed by a dragon. Helped by young Wiglaf, Beowulf slavs the monster and is fatally wounded. The poem ends with Beowulf's funeral.

Theme: "For any nobleman death is better than a life of shame." A grim code of heroism structures the action: the warrior must keep faith with his lord and fight to the limits of courage. Darkness and nasties are all around, Only Christian belief provides illumination.

Style: Old English verse is neither stanzaic nor rhymed but instead uses an alliterative four-stressed line. The language has harbaric splendour entwined with riddling difficulty. The digression and hrisk transitions hint at a range of ethical and historical reference that is lost forever.

Chief strengths: No other epic so combines the primitive with the allusively sophisticated, Beowulf's alien mixture of Christianity. paganism and martial valour constantly startles: the descriptions of violence achieve a repellent beauty.

compulsive showing off can grate. Nobody accepts a goblet of mead without launching into a catalogue of past triumphs.

What they thought of it then: The poem is huried among other monster tales in the Cotton manuscript: possibly enjoyed as a yarn, it wasn't highly regarded.

What we think of it now: Without Beowulf, Old English specialists would be out of work. The poem has been interpreted as folk legend, Christian allegory, political clegy and a satire on the heroic code. Most critics tend to rubbish the last third.

Responsible for: The genre of fantasy fiction. Tolkein wrote the Lord of the Rings under Beowulf's shadow.

Gavin Griffiths



The books listen to

Strongly recommended for a Christmas present, Penguin English Verse (Penguin, 18hrs, £50) is a cavalcade of verse from Thomas Wyatt to Wilfrid Owen, read by nine fine actors and edited by Paul Driver as "an anthology for the ear", by rhythmie balance and tonal contrast rather than strict chronology. Innovatively packaged as a gift set with six pairs of cassettes, each flanked by the complete text of the poems. Also pricey, but worth it, is Talkies-award winner Wives and Daughters (Cover to Cover, 25hrs30, £44,00) Prunella Scales skips effortlessly between innocence and experience as she reads Mrs Gaskell's unforgettable story of a doomed marriage and its aftermath.

Christina Hardyment

The book meant to read

THE INDEPENDENT LONG Y

Simon Calde blessings bey shimmering I

ext time you read that a allow a whill of sceptic wall in with the breezy York, I have been assured, his pulse, and precisely 165 river iting island of Dominica. The implication is simple: t

numerous is the resource, you con a different une every day for a yea in lyap years, will have 24 hours let My teach atoms are twowist. I never read of a destination bestow 364 or 367 of a particular assert a gest that a certain amount of ro goes on Second the fact that a occurs with the frequency of their of days in the year is not automat Good Thing, Indeed, I have no wi to set leed again at some publis a So learning that Antigua has 300 f provided a degree of expersion, p lark since sources disagree alson b or not the total is reached with a of the estand's smaller siliting. Ha

Leould have set out to count evgle are of shimmering when that th the weather in the Carabbean has glorious thighs in the mid-80s, k 10 degrees less), that instead I'm the notion that there are plenty of and went off to enumerate Ar

other blessings Every country, however modest a capital. St John's is a effectfully dated sort of place, spruced penough to look passable for the ship visities - a quarter-million la A more alluring statistic, the tucked just inside the door of the museum. Pride of place is given to that Viv Richards used for his breaking century off 56 deliveries; match in 1986. Alongside it - an ing sorry for itself - is the cricket b took the punishment, so bruises resemble un over-ripe passion in

isesides emphasising the for cricketing superiority of the West the museum makes the British smile, and frown. The good e thanks to the refreshingly strai ward nature of the stout old cour that has been converted into a p learning about the island. The s Antigua from the turnical of its warming to that temperaturus Viv R innings is traced out in a sec



meant to

# travel&outdoors

Battle with the shrubbery - taming the front garden....12 Wyoming to New Zealand, on skis....17

# Reasons to be cheerful in Antigua part 365

Simon Calder counts the blessings beyond the island's shimmering beaches

York, I have been assured, bas 365 pubs; and precisely 365 river irrigate the

The implication is simple that so numerous is the resource, you could visit a different one every day for a year (and, n leap years, still have 24 hours left over). My reservations are twofold. First, I never read of a destination bestowed with gest that a certain amount of rounding sweetness of upmarket tourism is the goes oo. Secood, the fact that an item source of the island's energy. Colonialism occurs with the frequency of the number of days in the year is oot automatically a Good Thing. Indeed. I have oo wish everto set foot again in some pubs in York. So learning that Antigua has 365 beaches provoked a degree of cynicism, particularly since sources disagree about whether or not the total is reached with the help of the island's smaller sibling, Barbuda:

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. et a nave:

I could have set out to count every single arc of shimmering silver. But this week the weather in the Caribbean bas been so glorious (highs in the mid-80s, lows just 10 degrees less), that instead Laccepted the notion that there are plenty of them - and went off to enumerate Antigua's other blessings.

Every country, however modest, needs a capital. St John's is a cheerfully dilapidated sort of place, spruced up just enough to look passable for the cruise ship visitors - a quarter-million last year. A more alluring statistic, though, is tucked just inside the door of the island's museum. Pride of place is given to the bat that Viv Richards used for his recordhreaking century off 56 deliveries in a test match in 1986. Aloogside it - and looking sorry for itself - is the cricket ball that took the punishment, so bruised as to

resemble an over-ripe passion fruit. Besides emphasising the long-term cricketing superiority of the West Indies, the museum makes the British visitor smile, and frown. The good cheer is thanks to the refreshingly straightforward oature of the stout old court house that has been converted into a place of learning about the island. The story of Antigua from the turmoil of its volcanic origins to that tempestuous Viv Richards

possesses 365 somethings, around in 10 breezy minutes - or stay all

unfavourable trade. Today, the bitter can take many forms.

without a skin as thick as sugar cane will Tottenham - as long as he could last withdances through the streets of St John's.

far off course that it was currectly lost in the Bermuda Triangle. But the damage was rapidly repaired in time for the main tourist seasoo. Bermuda shorts are hack

So are the "retail opportunities" that multiply around any Caribhean port. Avoid Little Switzerland (a watch shop, not a series of Alp-like humps) and the King's Casino, in favour of amhling past the outsized Anglican cathedral that disproportionately dominates St John's. Keep going until you see the following messa "Go to school. Study hard. Try to

become a hero." innings is traced out to a series of slice cleanly through the rumble of diesel

allow a whiff of scepticism to morning to soak up the whole sad story. That is where the frown comes in. The

dreadful crimes perpetrated by the Europeans against the original inhabitants, and later against the slaves imported from Africa, hit particularly hard in Antigua The roots of Eastern Caribbean inde harsh treatment oo the island's plantations. The planters, and the sugar, have long dissolved against a background of

You emerge from the museum, blinking, ioto the high Caribbean noon, a little wiser and a lot more humble. Anyone immediately feel anxious about the reactioo of local people to outsiders. Which makes the reality - that Antiguans are open; generous and welcoming hosts - all the more gratifying. The ties with Britain are sturdy, too. I hitched a ride with Charles, who was boro on the island hut had spent 33 years of his working life in out tasting the soothing, salty air that

He told me the hurricane seasoo this year passed without serious damage in Antigua, a relief after the assault by Hurricane Luís in 1995. From some of the reports at the time, you might have concluded that the island had been blown so

These stern words adom a hoarding above the gentle frenzy of commerce that comprises the town market. Trade takes the form of heroic, staccato yells. They

thud of bass guitar riffs that boom out of passing cars - 1.8-litre ghetto-hlasters. Centre stage in this throng are the fruits coaxed patiently from the land. Antigua is smaller than the Isle of Wight, yet from some viewpoints the countryside goes on for ever. Forget that you are never more than seven miles from one of those 365 beaches, and plough across the heart of the island to touch the real texture of Antigua. First, choose your weapon. This is

how an Antiguan second-hand car dealer must feel as he takes buyers around the showroom. The people of Antigua are unfailingly polite - until they get hehind the wheel of a vehicle. I had originally read the 40mph signs as signifying a maximum speed, but many drivers appear to regard this as either a bare minimum or an outright challenge.

The excitement goes up a notch as soon as there is some obstruction, when the drive-on-the-left rule is suspended. Skoda pick-ups (I promise you there is such a vehicle) clash with smoked-glass Japanese minibuses that barrel around the island. and any bystander unwise enough to be walking along the road must he prepared to jump into a ditch at a momeot's notice.

You will probably think me foolish to confess that last Tuesday I rented a hicycle to take my two-wheeled place in this mobile circus. Indeed, in 40 miles of cycling I was forced off the road three imes. But, if you remember, last Tuesday in Britain the hlizzards were beginning to hite. In Antigua, my only complaint about the weather was that the sun was perhaps impossibly shiny and the sky a shade too improbably blue.

(the site doubles as a bus station) and the A bike bestows the freedom to take Antigua at its own pace. You get heckled plenty, in the cheeriest of manners, from villagers who think the sight of a bonky on a hike is a hoot - or at least a change from the Jeep-swerving tourists.

I unwound through the island, past prairie landscapes speckled with cattle and framed by scraggy escarpments and that sharp ultramarine sky. A long-overturned car quietly rusted into this wilderness, as plants flexed their tentacles around the rotting steel hulk. The whole scene demanded a health warning at the foot of the foreground - because it looked as if the Marlboro Man was

expected to trot along at any moment. He didn't show. But if he had, the two womeo toasting corn cobs against the pastel-yellow backdrop of their none-up, twodown timber home would have been ready with elevenses. Antigua is one loog snack-opportunity: corn here, coconut there, an occasional curried goat served in uonerviog proximity to the live, unspiced version. My favourite roadside stop was the Your Home Town Lun-

cheooette. If only it were. After a while you begin to discern the concise construction of every Antiguan village. The sturdiest structure in each hamlet is the church, a stark import among the cluster of diminutive homes. These hungalows are mostly wood, with a lattice of shutters that makes each one as well ventilated as a Eurotunnel freight wagon. Children hicker gently (pausing to smirk and wave at the cyclist), while notices warn of the community rules: "Loiterers," threatened one sign, "will be persecuted." Fearing the Antiguan

equivalent of a Farwah. I pedalled on. From tip to toe of this concise island takes 90 minutes. You know you are nearing the end when the scanering of trees on the horizon is augmented by the geomet-

ric precision of yacht masts. English Harbour is still an accurate name for the ample hay that subdues Caribbean storms, and provides shelter for around 100 yachts. Within the sanctum of Nelson's Dockyard, you hear plenty of British voices among the boat-owners, supplemented by American and Australian acceots. But you notice more the hold Georgian architecture that turns the ensemble into a most characterful marina.

Two centuries ago, Antigua had a parallel role to its position today: huh for the Caribbean. Nowadays aircraft home in oo the island; but as the 18th century gave way to the 19th, this was the hase for the British navy in the region.

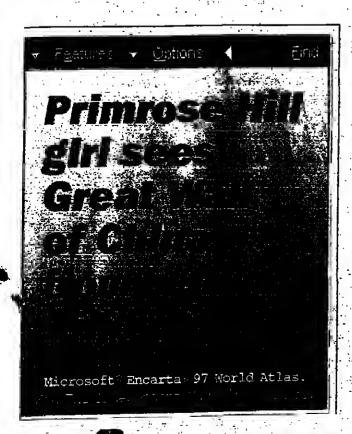
Horatio Nelson was a frequent visitor, though on one occasion he hecame so ill hefore departure for Britain, he ordered a cask of rum to he placed on board to preserve his body should he die. An exhihition of naval paraphernalia includes old dockyard furniture scarred by ancient graffiti, and Nelson's telescope.

You can turn a hlind eve to tourism by scrambling along to the end of the peninsula, across rocks strewn with pregnantlooking Turk's head cacri. The lazy arm of the sea wall flicks out into the Caribbean. while the shoulder merges with a gaunt cliff. The skewed strata of rich red rocks takes a pounding from the sea, and melts into a series of jagged crescents. I thought: I hope they're not regarded as beaches. And then I counted my blessings.

Half nelson: The view over English Harhour from Shirley Heights (named after a former governor). in the 18th century Horatio Nelson was a frequent visitor to the British naval base here. And in the Nelson's Dockyard museum the Admiral's telescope can be seen

proudly on display. PHOTOGRAPH, ROBERT HARDING







On call: this month, Antigua acquires a new dialling code. The old 001 809 country code is replaced by 001 268. This should be followed by the seven-digit number. Antigua is four hours behind the UK (nooo in Londoo is 8am in St John's).

Getting there: British Airways and BWIA operate nonstop flights from Gatwick and Heathrow respectively. Official fares cost around £920 return; cheaper tickets are widely available for around £500 return through discount agents such as the Caribbean Reunion Club (0171-344 0101). Some long-stay specials for as little as £249 for seats in charter flights. Prices rise sharply over Christmas.

Getting in: British citizens need only a valid passport to be admitted for short visits.

Getting out: departure tax of EC\$30 (£7) is payable at the airport.

Package holidays: numerous tour operators, including Thomson, Knom and British Airways Holidays, offer inclusive packages in Antigua, using either scheduled

flights, or charters on airlines such as Britannia and Caledonian Airways. From Thomson (0990 502399), a fortnight in February at the Club Antigua costs around £1,250, including flights from Gatwick or Manchester.

Getting around: hus services are frequent on most routes, if scary. Simon Calder rented a mountain hike from Cycle Krazy in St John's (463 9253) for £9 a day. The best. though dated, map is published by Ordnance Survey at £6.

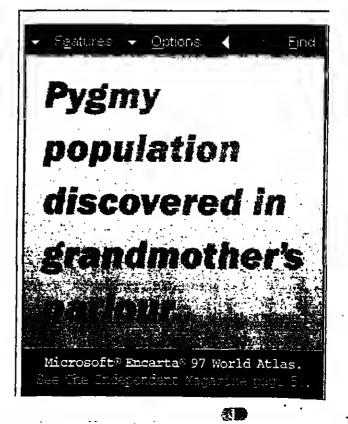
Staying healthy: besides the risk of road accidents, the most significant threat is from the intense sun in the

Cashing up: the currency in Antigua is the Eastern Caribbean dollar (ECS), shared with seven other nearby nations. The bank rate this week was: £1 = EC\$4.30 and US\$1 = EC\$2.75. The US dollar is readily acceptable everywhere - but at a disadvantageous rate compared with what you can get at a bank.

Seeing sights: the Museum of Antigua in St John's opens daily except Sunday; a donation of EC\$5 is requested. Nelson's Dockyard is open daily, admissioo EC\$6.50.

Mast see: the hig event is Sailing Week, 27 April-3 May,

Further Information: Antigua High Commission. 15 Thayer Street, London W1M 5LD (0171-486 7073).



Thursday brings Thanksgiving, the start of serious shopping – and the American way to take the heat off Christmas. By Matthew Hoffman

hanksgiving is a true original, a holiday invented by the Americans and dedicated to celebrating the country's founding pur-pose: plenitude. Yes, some immigrants travelled to those shores in search of religious or political freedom: but as every observer of American society for the past two centuries has noted, material success is the country's true god damned by clites as "consumerism", enjoyed by everyone else as "prosperity". The citizens of the United States know they have much to be grateful for. And once a year they gather around their tables to acknowledge that gratitude - which they accomplish by overeating.

The First Thanksgiving - in 1621 - set the pattern. In one sense it was a traditional harvest festival, only the Pilgrims of Phymouth, Massachusetts were celebrating the success of their first harvest. They were Puntans from East Anglia and Lincolnshire, who had sailed from Plymouth in Devon in the Mayflower the year before. When I was a school child in Pennsylvania, it was explained to me that the Pilgrims had survived their first, harsh, New England winter through the assistance of the local Indians and, in gratitude, they invited them to participate in their hirst teast. Now I am pleased to learn, from a posting on the Internet, that Edward Winslow, a leader of the Plymouth colony, mentioned the Indians in his account of the 1621 jamboree:

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week ... Many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some 90 men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our

governor, and upon the captain and others." What has clevated the festivities from a religious harvest festival for the God-fearing to a national event is the growth of the US from an agrarian to an industrial - and now post-industrial - society. In the process the holiday has taken oo the customary forms of a secular country - where Christmas is about shopping, and Easter is about a

Getting there: London-New York is the busiest

international air route in the world. Between

from London, destination Kennedy airport to

These flights are supplemented by regional

New York City, or its New Jersey rival Newark.

departures from Birmingham, Manchester and

Glasgow, and connections are available from a

range of provincial airpons connecting through

Dublin, Amsterdam and Reykjavik, Before mid-

December, you can expect to pay £200-300 for

a return flight over a weekend, inclusive of

taxes of around £25. To get the best prices,

book through a discount agency rather than

airlines with less frequent services, such as

Kuwait Airways, Air India and El Al.

direct with the airline. The lowest fares are on

Sam and 7pm every day, at least 20 wide-bodied aircraft (plus a couple of Concordes) take off

parade. In fact, for many Americans, the most significant fact about Thanksgiving is that the date it is celebrated (the fourth Thursday in Novemher) marks the beginning of Christmas shopping and this, in turn, is signalled by a Thanksgiving Day parade that is concluded with the delivery of Santa

Claus to the largest department store in town. Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day parade in New York is the most famous of these events, but it has its smaller counterparts throughout the country. Philadelphia claims to have the oldest Thanksgiving parade and even little nearby Pottstown, my home town, musters its school marching bands and drill teams and white-hooted cheerleaders to glitter in the late autumn sunshioe.

But the meal remains the main event: ritualised in its meou (turkey with cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie are traditional, although the side dishes vary with ethnicity) and demanding in its attendance – the whole family, no matter how spread out across the country, is summoned to a common table. (Chinese restaurants in New York shut up shop this one day in the year, and their staff take the day off in the casinos of New Jersey.) There is a hidden blessing here that only an Americao like myself, who has lived through the English Christmas, with its suffocat-ing triple role of family get-together, children's gift fest and religious holiday, might appreciate. For Americans, Thanksgiving takes the heat off Christmas. The extended family gathers (and has its annual tiffs and longueurs); no gifts are exchanged; and Christmas is left as a quiet time for pareots and children to muddle through on their own.

The nicest fact about Thanksgiving is its limitations. The holiday resists commercialisation and other add-ons: no special cards, no new, elaborate ways of roasting a turkey, no making the holiday more special by taking an expensive trip. Andy Warhol once pointed out the democratic credentials of Coca-Cola. There's no way of getting a better one, he observed: a fancier version just isn't a Coke. The same is true of Thanksgiving. Get the family together and eat a hig hird. That's it; that's all you can do. Otherwise it ain't Thanksgiving. Welcome to America's democratic holiday.

Additional research by Alissa Quart in New York



Start spreading the news: Thanksgiving marks the start of the Christmas shopping season

PROTOGRAPH, JON LEVY "

#### **New York: the fast facts**

Airport links: the cheapest and surest way from Kennedy into Maobattan is to take the free Port Authority bus to Howard Beach subway station. From here, a \$1.50 (90p) ride will take you to any station on the New York subway system. Total journey time from Kennedy airport to mid-town Manhattan is about 90 minutes. From Newark airport in New Jersey, the most exotic alternative to the New Jersey Transit hus to Machattan, price \$7 (£4.50), is to take a taxi to Hoboken for around \$25 (£16) and cross on the ferry across the Hudson River.

Getting around: the subway system is fast,

cheap and complicated. Before attempting to use the system, pick up a map and some flat-fare tokens (\$1.50/90p) from a kiosk in a subway station. These tokens are also valid for Manhattan hus services, which mostly run north-south along the main avenues.

Accommodation: (All the New York telephone numbers quoted below should be prefixed 001 212 when dialling from the UK.) New York is easily the most expensive place to stay in the US. A room in a good, ceotral hotel such as the Mayflower on Central Park West (265 0060) will cost at least \$160 (£95) a night for a double

room, and bookings before Christmas are heavy. An alternative is a place in a hostel. These are often restricted to foreign visitors only, apparently in a bid to deter local low life. Single and double rooms are available at the centrally located Vanderbilt YMCA (224 East 47th Street, 756 9600) for £35/£45 respectively, while along at the Big Apple Hostel (119 W 45th Street, 302 2603) a double room costs \$58 (£35) - hut you have to take a chance oo the day; it does oot accept advance bookings.

Packages: some specialists such as Major Travel (0171-485 7017) sell tours that include

transatlantic flights and hotel accommodation, for around £449. The big airlines also sell packages through their tour operating subsidiaries - American Airlines Holidays (0181-577 9966), British Airways Holidays (01293 723100). United Vacations (0181-313 0999) and Virgin Holidays (111293 617181).

Red tape: British passport holders travelling oo normal return air tickets to the United States do not require visas. A visa is useful, however, if you plan to visit America frequently - it outs down on form-filling and reduces processing time at US Immigration. A visitor's visa, valid for up to 1t) years, costs £13.75 from the Visa Section of the US Emhassy. Call the premium-rate number 0891 200290 for further details.

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#### something to declare

#### trouble spots

Reports from Latin America

French Guiana: Gangs of armed rioters fought potice, looted stores and set them oo fire for four nights - Reuter.

Colombia: About 200 Colombians have fled to Panama to escape violeoce in northwest Colombia - long the scene of bitter conflicts hetween rebels and night-.

#### bargain of the week

For the next week, a car and four passengers can travel from Liverpool to Belfast for a lotal of £99 each way on

Norse Irish Ferries (01232 779090) with a herth in a cabin, a four-course dinner and a full Irish breakfast.

wing paramilitary groups battliog for control of cootraband routes - Reuter

storms have caused the worst flooding in 42 years in parts

of Central America, killing at

least nine people and driving

tens of thousands from their

homes. Seven people have

died in due to storms over

the past nine days -AP.

Honduras: Widespread

#### visitors' book

Museum of Antigua, West Indies (the book asks for suggestions for improvements, as well as

Restore your landmarks and forts - Vince Marrone, New

Happy and friendly - Trevor Firman, London.

Cassell, Quebec.

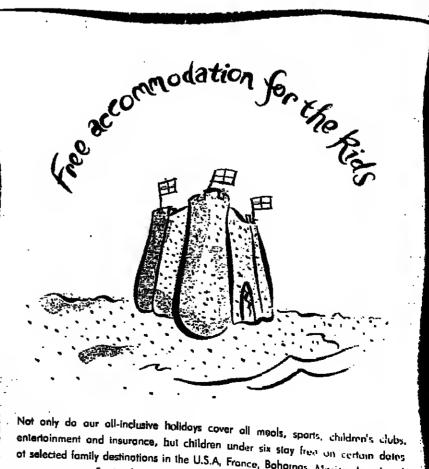
Particularly good for children - Derek Bond, London,

Thank you for preserving the

past for all to see - Germaine

l went back to the past for a while - Arif, Bangladesh.

A cool cocktail would be nice -Johanne Foster, Preston.



of selected family destinations in the U.S.A. France, Bohomos, Mesico, Israel and Spain. A soving of up to £616 a week per child.

#### Club Med 4. Start Living.

RESERVATIONS: 0171-581 1161 BROCHURE REQUEST: 01455 852 202 OFFER APPLIES TO ONE CHILD PER ADULT ON CERTAIN DISTES AND IS SUPJECT TO AVAILABILITY

#### Robert Rollas

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were no sleeping donkers as we dre motorways but, equally, not much in ern Andalucia is at a half way stage The movement every from living a of all clusses in Andalucia has accel houses and farm buildings are man-have been converted man villas for divmakers

Almeria, the local capital, is a state centre. The Moore' foresast, the remains as a massive remainder of the scholars whose contains of executi

in these puris.

Dun't miss the bar, "said a halp's ing from the top as we puffed up th forcess, which now defends only man This promise was a stimulus to pri dreaded Spanish hour of Jone had arr. lacked up for the day, it was worth though. The views across the city an the highest section of the fortress is that contrasts with the Mourish style If anything, the cathedral at Aimeri

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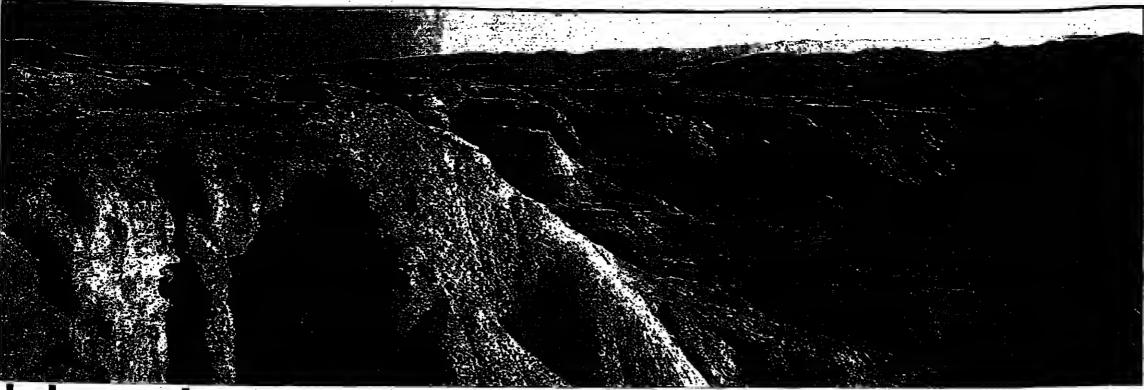
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INDEPENDENT



The wild frontier: the desert arroyos, land formations at Tabernas, north of Almeria - an area which was much used for filming

PHOTOKIRAPII ROBERT HARDING

# Hemingway would approve

#### Robert Rollason tours the wild country around Almería in southern Spain

driver had to honk and slow down to avoid running into two donkeys that were sleeping in the road," he wrote in The Sun

His words lingered alongside my view of how it is now. There were no sleeping donkeys as we drove along the silk-smooth motorways but, equally, not much modern traffic either. East-

ern Andalucía is at a balf-way stage of development.

The movement away from living on the land by the Spanish of all classes in Andalucía bas accelerated, so that even farmhouses and farm buildings are now oddly rare, although many have been converted into villas for foreign residents and holi-

Almería, the local capital, is a stately city, at least in its ancient centre. The Moors' fortress, the 10th-century Alcazaba. remains as a massive reminder of those warriors, builders and scholars whose centuries of occupation are still so apparent in these parts.

Don't miss the bar," said a belpful Yorkshireman descending from the top as we puffed up the last 100 steps of the old fortress, which now defends only markets and an attendant café. This promise was a stimulus to progress, but no good. The dreaded Spanish hour of 2pm had arrived, and the bar was being locked up for the day. It was worth pressing on to the top, though. The views across the city and sea are spectacular, and the highest section of the fortress is a bulky Christian addition that contrasts with the Moorish style of the rest.

If anything, the cathedral at Almeria looks more like a fortress

emingway conjured up an enduring image of Spain that still lingers in the mind's eye. "Climbing all the time we crossed the top of a col, the road winding back and forward on itself, and then it was really Spain ... the massive walls, the inside comes as a big surprise, with soaring the control of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and close down to strick the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or, a stand to book and the solution of Sorbas, built on a long high elift, or a stand to be solved to be

massive walls, the inside comes as a big surprise, with soaring columns rising to an almost Chartres-like Gothic ceiling.

The centre of Almería has a pleasing, metropolitan feel. The town has been significantly moved into the modern world by a recent filling in of one of those depressing dry river beds so common in southern Spain. This ran right down the centre of the main boulevard, the Rambla de Belén.

On the way out of Almeria the buildings are new and the townscape, to put it mildly, lacks neatness. The scrub becomes a desert 18 miles to the north, where the small town of Tabernas is the centre of Andalucía's famous Spaghetti Western country. Today, a village is curiously called Mini Hollywood. but the film-makers have long gone and only their Western

Getting there: scheduled flights to Almería from Heathrow, via Madrid, with Iberia (0171-830 0011) cost

Christmas. Charter flights go direct to Almería: Monarch bas a service on Sundays for £139 available through Spanish Travel Service (0171-387 5337) and Capital Flights (0171-209 4000) offers a fare of £89 oo Britannia from

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Many small Spanish towns in the area are, of course, fantastic enough to be seen almost as wholehearted theme parks: the hanging village of Sorbas, built on a long high eliff, or, at the coast. Mojácar, where the buildings are stacked up into a huge.

Some towns here still have cave dwellers, Cuevas de Almanzora, 60 miles north of Almería city, is a case in point. The town also bas its own well restored Moorish alcazaba, which houses an attractive art gallery. In spite of this prettification, Cuevas retains the feel of a traditional Spanish small community, with gypsy market traders still wearing black suits and widemmed black Córdoba hats like the silhouetted man in the

old Sandeman poster. Andalucía seems to prefer to keep one foot in the past in many ways. In this year's national election, it remained loval

Getting around: Picking up a rental ear at the airport is

easiest. A week's rental for a group A car (the smallest vehicle available) costs £139 from Budget (0800 181181),

inclusive of unlimited mileage, collision damage waiver and tax. Cars are also available from Avis (0990 900500),

Heriz (0990 996699) and Holiday Autos (0990 300400).

Getting informatinn: Spanish Tourist Office, 57 St James's Street, London SW1A 1LD (0171-499 0901).

France

in all its

Philippa Czernin

Drive

France

and cottages

to a local boy, the former socialist prime minister Felipe Conzalez from Seville, at the moment when many regions switched allegiance to José Maria Aznar's conservative PP party. Expatriates are not allowed to vote in national elections, although they can in local elections after seven years' residence. In some communes one imagines there may be enough of them to affect the results. From any highish point in Cortijo Grande, an Eighties development near the small town of Turre, west of Mojacar, scores of villas can be seen dotted about, and all of them are occupied by expatriates, mostly British.

In Turre, Rickie of Rickie's Bar is not a Bogart lookalike hut

another English entrepreneur. In the mountaintop village of Sierra Cahrera the proprietor of the Pub Los Pastores is also English. From a distance, the village looks as old as time, but in fact every huilding has been put up since 1985. An Englishman wearing a Harlequins rugby shirt sat at the bar as we ate lunch. We might have been in Surrey, except for those amazing views outside of mountain, valley and the blue sea stretching away towards Cartagena.

The odd thing is that the mood of change seems to suit both the incoming Brits and the indigenous Spanish. The British like the countryside while the Spanish have always preferred to live in towns. Today Spanish property owners are rebuilding early-19th-ceotury town houses in exact and exquisite detail.

Will this process of change keep going? Judging by the happy party of people who gathered at the home of our expat friend Douglas, the British love-affair with Spain is far from over. The only threat to it may be global warming. If the climate of Granada shifts up as far as Guildford, the Brits may return to their own part of the world - as the Moors did five centuries ago. And I think Papa Hemingway would approve of that.

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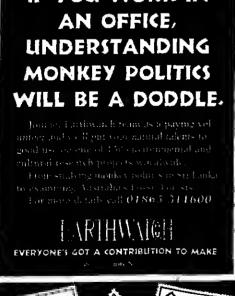
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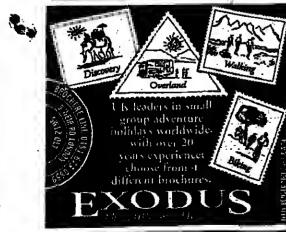
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#### Toolshed

#### Tom Barber advises on equipment for hire

Some pitiful souls are driven into paroxysms of longing by gadgets, and cannot resist a new purchase. For those with a more pragmatic outlook, hiring often makes more sense than buying especially for expensive and infrequently

used equipment.

t lack both time and energy for digging, so every year I hire a big beast of a rotavator to give my largest allotment a thorough going over. It has a powerful Shp engine, and the job takes only about four hours. I then pass the machine on to a neighbour for the rest of the day and split the £50 hire cost. To huy the thing would set me back around £2,000. which, at the current rate of usage, would pay my rental fees until I am I to.

The advantages are not limited to finance. Machinery that has sat around for months on end tends to sulk and refuse to start. metal bits get rusted up, and cutting blades are often left hlunt. Hiring spares you from all that inecitable maintenance and repair. As with a rented car, hired tools live last and die young. It is simply not worth a hrm's time to fuss over genatric gear, so most of the equipment is relatively new, and often more powerful and efficient than that normally available to the domestic market.

Home shredders, for example, are usually agonisingly slow. Far better to save up your debris for several months and then hire in a hig, petrol shredder that will tear through the whole lot in next to no time. Hiring also avoids the headache of finding permanent storage space, and reduces the losses should you suffer a shed break-in.

The range of equipment available for hire is staggering; everything from a shovel to a JCB. If you are not familiar with your local oudets, it's worth having a look around hefore you embath on a major around or before you emhark on a major project or lash out big tool money. The most frequently requested garden item is prohably a set of hedge cutters; then there are butch versions of familiars such as mowers and strimmers, and more specialist items - paraffin weed burners, post hole borers, long-reach pruners. If you're planning a new look, help is at band to take some of the tedious drudgery out of landscaping - concrete mixers, compactor plates for ramming down hard core, cutters for paving blocks. For something really amhitious, you could even get in a miniexcavator. Some of the equipment might prove a hit of a squeeze for the family car, hut delivery can always be arranged.

Weekly hire is usually only double the day rate so it pays to set aside a block of time for each joh rather than tackling things piecemeal. Fuel, cutting blades and so on are usually extra. Not unreasonably, all hire firms demand a sizeahle deposit, and you are also liable to a cleaning charge if you return tools without having made any effort to clean them.

A few ground rules. Quality, cost and equipment range vary considerably so it's worth shopping around and looking at what is on offer before you part with any money. Never take something away before you are completely confident about how to operate it. If necessary get the shop to give a proper demonstration. Always make sure you have all the recommended safety equipment gloves, goggles, ear defenders or whatever and then use it. The most effortlessly lethal hit of garden equipment is undoubtedly a chainsaw, and I am pleased to see that many firms will now hire them out only if you take the appropriate safety gear with them and can guarantee that you are competent in their toe.

Make sure that anything that you do hire is in good nick, with sharp hlades, litted safety guards, undamaged cables and so on. All equipment should have been thoroughly checked since it was last hired out - your life should not be threatened by the carelessness of the previous user. With all that taken care



gardening

Lesley Kant tackles the holly in her garden at The Old Vicarage in Carbrooke, Norfolk

# And now for the shrubbery

#### WORKSHOP: The front garden is a muddle. How to sort it out? By Anna Pavord

We have a garden of two acres which we have developed over the past 12 years. The two of ns are the only gardeners so we tend to undertake a project a year. We have agreed that next year's project has to be the front of the house muddle. And here I am bereft of ideas.

The front of the house faces east and gazes out, across a gravelled drive, to a sort of Victorian shrubbery - the remnants of, I suppose. The trees, as they mostly are, include a fine variegated holly tree, a slightly unconvincing English yew (it needs more space), laurel and box. There is also a weeping elm and a terminally ill hemlock.

All these are bordered on their east hy a mixed hedge which screens a country road, and are undercarpeted by scraggly hypericum, some ivy, archangel and really rohnst marestail. My hushand feels we should remove the laurel and hemlock and do some enthusiastic pruning and shap-ing. I am terrified of giving the marestail any more light: we haven't eradicated it anywhere else in the garden and have been forced into lateral semi-solutions. The border, though, is a formless mnddle, but important, as it is the first glimpse any visitor gets of the garden. I don't want to begin wholesale destruction without a clearer idea of the outcome. Can you help, please?

esley Kant and Steve Cunneen live in the kind of house that is the stuff of town-dwellers' dreams: an 1820s vicarage surrounded by its own land, on the edge of a Norfolk village. They did plenty of dreaming of their own before they bought it, 13 years ago. At that stage they were living in a terraced house in London, she working as a schools inspector, he as a project manager for Barclays. The London garden whetted their appetite for more, but when they bought the house, with its two acres, Steve said they "didn't know what an acre looked like. It was just something farmers talked about."

Not much had happened in the garden since the previous owners had bought the vicarage from the church. three years before Mr Cunneen and Ms Kant came on the scene. A job lot of conifers was dotted about (most now removed - hurrah!) and the beginnings of a herbaceous border laid out. But a phenomenal amount has happened in the last 12 years. Mr Cunneen and Ms Kant are the best kind of gardeners:

observant, patient and perfectionist.
Since the remnant of the shrubbery described in Ms Kant's letter was one of the few mature features they inherited, they left it alone while they planted hedges, dug vegetable gardens, planted trees and trained topiary (and much more) in the rest of the garden. Now the shrubbery's time has come.

In her letter, Ms Kant calls it "important", as the first hit of the garden that visitors see. Yes, that is true, but it is not important in the sense that it needs to draw attention to itself. As you turn from the lane into the vicarage gate, the shrubbery is on your left, with a hig. enormous uprights bad already died, and only wisps of life remained in the

gravelled parking area in front of the house, which is on the right. So you are as likely as not to see the shrubbery sideways on. It will never be important as a special "feature" in the way.

The shruhbery's role is as a backdrop, which ought to remain sympathetic in style with the bouse which it faces. And, most important, it must continue to shield the house from the east wind which in this flat land can be a killer.

You have to go through this general kind of preamble before you can get down to the particulars of a planting scheme. You should have a clear idea of what the plants need to do before you can start suggesting suitable candidates. And here, of course, the main players are already in place.

The planting sequence starts on the curve, as you turn into the drive, with the strange little weeping elm. It is dotty rather than beautiful (and not part of the original period planting), but curiously appropriate. After the elm, is the hig yew at the hack of the shrubbery. The superb variegated holly is planted right in the foreground and reaches out over the gravel. It may originally have been clipped as a topiary specimen. That would make its position more understandable. Behind it is the dying hemlock, then English laurel in the background, with a spreading hox tree in front. A fine, small weeping horse chest-nut fills the back corner. The shrubbery

is about 15ft wide and 30 yards long. Before putting in any new plants, they obviously needed to assess the existing plants and decide what they were going to keep. "Well, the hemlock will have to go," I said unfeelingly. Two of its three enormous uprights bad already died,

couldn't bear to cut it down while there was still a whisper of life in it. So it will stay, and act as a clothes-horse for a climbing Vitis coignetiae.

That cuts down the space for putting in new plants, but it doesn't matter. I bave exactly the same feelings about a ridiculously sick lilac in my garden - one of the few termants of the original planting there.

The laurels could be substantially reduced, without affecting their usefulness as windbreaks. I suggested that Ms Kant took out at ground level several of the large branches that were growing forward, which would release space for some contrasting shrubs. The yew had a couple of seedling elders interfering with it which needed to come out. It would look better, too, I thought, if the ivy were stripped from the bark, which glows a delicious, rich, oxblood colour n wet weather.

Towards the back of the shruhbery there was room for a couple of quiet shrubs which would not mind deep shade and which would add interest to the mix, while fitting in with the predominantly 19th-century ambience of the planting. I suggested Decaisnea fargesti, with wonderful long pinnate leaves. It can be stooled down to keep it at whatever size you want -a useful trait in this kind of situation. And - because Ms Kant likes hydrangeas and hasn't got any
- H sargentiana, which has buge paddle leaves with the texture of sharkskin.

For the foreground, the handsome mahonia 'Charity' and either another pale-flowered lacecap hydrangea such as White Wave', or a flat-tiered viburnum

third. It was "going back", as the kind, euphemistic phrase has it. But Ms Kant well packed around with good compost. well packed around with good compost and bonemeal. And mulched annually. This is a hungry, thirsty billet for them.
But, properly looked after, they will
cope. And these two gardeners certainly
know how to look after plants.

The least successful section of the shruhhery is the first bit, on the curve. by the weeping elm. Ms Kant had tried grassing it, so that by mowing, they might see off the marestail. But the marestail still flourishes, the grass doesn't grow hecause of the shade, and it looks inappropriate. The rest of the shruhbery is carpeted with ivy.

I suggested they did away with the grass, and tried lenten hellebores, putting them in as big plants. Not the posh kinds. Tough, cheap ones that will flower before the marestail gets its head above the ground. In between, ferns such as hartstongue, and the marble-leaved Arum italicum 'Pictum'. The circle inside the cage of weeping branches from the clm could be filled

solid with autumn-flowering evclamen. As for the rest of the underplanting, I would get rid of the hypericum and encourage the ivy, by sifting some compost over it during the winter. This will please the marestail, too, but that can't be helped. Mr Cunneen and Ms Kant will have to cut down the most dangerous spears and live with the rest. If they haven't managed to kill it over the last 12 years, they will probably not do so over the next 12. Snowdrops in the ivy. Scillas, too, in the more open sections. And more ferns, especially those (such as the polypodies) that don't mind dry situations. Since the time of the dinosaurs, they have learnt to hight for their Lebensuch as V plicatum 'Lanarth'. All the snaum against the bullying manestail.

David Walker s

he Albert silvent a community brian town of Arnside and in h be is outside, youing across the e-to the Lakeland heights beyond different the view becomes when there and find in the foreground

But enough of views a sationt la Hwatespub. Theories of Blackburg Jrinkers in this corner of the North ! choice, although it shaket iess than it rewashed inn, shabbits combutable insito Ulversion, home of the great take f

It's from the dinky promenade at f plenty of parking space, that our walk a radhead. Coal steamers unleaded a neetions inland via Carnforth Transwashed away and rebuilt several limes

It's a quiet place-fredientent is prov ignored the hooter and all the signs. into danger from the tast-crang lides Kent estuary from a saudy band of ( a wide and choppy ruler of the sea-

We are going in a carde - so you ca order if you like With the Abion anglers' data and mak along the water then walk along the high water line, i you will need to clamber up the bimb shore, through the oak and beech a

Half a mile or so council the shore -the sea low) are various a vou reach. the coast, through the path can be m the left which seems to be trading into but the saving grace is the way the i trees. The path soon leads into dense a hundred yards or so on from the you open out at the shore again at A the path along the column

For a mile in so the walk is a defiel side, views across to Walney Island to

#### Corporat Michael Prestage (

🖥 ॥ तील प्राच्यातिक भं त्र धारामीद्वर भे क नाव try house hotels, business exceptions are getting the chance to try out the latest line in responsite hospitality: that most anal pursuit, sheepdog trialing Recently, for instance, executives from the communications giant Erreson were able to swap impages sums and power dressing for joints and accomplings and the chance to try the reality of the BIRC's One Man And the Dog.

The BIR programme, may ment 20th year, bas made sheepdog frialling universally recognised. Itomically though, the increasing popularity of such events comes in a time where tewer (copie inc training does and their use on farms is dummishing in tarmers ope for such aids as nestorisce qual bikes

A shortage of trained sheepday has seen their value som. At a recent anction a Sentrebridge, near Free on Powrs, 90 dogs were auctioned metadang one that reached a record price in Britain of Chebel

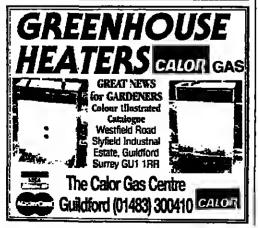
Merion Owen began sheepdog trialling as a 10 year-old, tollowing tradition started by his grandfather His father is still one of the leading dog trainers in Wales. I see no problem with doing corporate events," Merion remarks "It help make trialling more popular, am

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#### Cuttings

n the appropriate surroundings of Stamford's 18th-century assembly rooms and theatre, I finally caught up with Emma this week. The film, that is, not the television series. Rather a blunt-edged script, it seemed, with some extraordinary added anachronisms. The oddest were the strawberries. The scriptwriters transposed the strawberry-picking scene from Mr Knightley's kitchen garden (in the book it is a fahulously wicked episode, with Mrs Elton lauding 'Hautbois' as the only strawberry worth eating) to a wood. That's fair enough. Except that in a wood you don't get strawberries the size of the supermarket 'Cambridge Favourite' which the cast were feeding each other in close-up. And if Gwyneth Paltrow had to do a "He loves me, he loves me not" sequence with daisies studding the lawn at her bome, the director should have shot the scene at daisy time (not difficult) rather than stud the foreground with vast white marguerites instead. For the real thing read Mavis Batey's new book Jane Austen and the English Landscape (Barn Elms, £19.99).

im Keeling of the Whichford Pottery has arranged a series of winter sales which start at the end of November. All gardeners know that the Third Law of Thermodywbatnot says that there is always room for one more pot in the garden. If you are feeling excessively altruistic you could buy some to give away as Christmas

presents. The sale at Whichford Poltery, Whichford, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, starts today and continues until 8 December. Rupert Golby will demonstrate ways to plant pots today and tomorrow at 11am and 2pm. Sales will also be beld at The Buildings, Broughton, Hanpshire (two miles west of Stockbridge, off the A30) from 29 November to 1 December and from 6 to 8 December (9am-5pm). Londoners may find it easier to get to Capel Manor. Bullsmoor Lane, Enfield, Middlesex, where Jim Keeling is holding a pottery sale on 7 and 8 December (9am-5pm).

Anna Pavord

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line of gardening books and receiving your request before are offering all readers a free 1996. Applications on a midnight on 30th November postcard to Carnell Ltd. Free Seed Offer, Main Road, Alresford, Colchester, Essex



# A view of Lakeland

David Walker strides out from Arnside in Cumbria



From Arnside, walk along the water's edge, dodging anglers' rods and tack

PHOTOGRAPH: PETER LOMAN

be is outside, gazing across the expanse of the Kent River to the Lakeland heights beyond—it's extraordinary how different the view becomes when there is acre upon acre of estuarial mud in the foreground.

rd

Section 1

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But enough of views - a salient fact is that the Albion is a drinkers in this corner of the North West are still well off for for cattle as late as the mid 17th century. choice, although it's a lot less than it used to be. Once, the whiteto Ulverston, home of the great Lake District brewer Hartley's.

It's from the dinky promenade in front of the Albion, with plenty of parking space, that our walk starts. Arnside was once a railhead. Coal steamers unloaded on the pier for rail connections inland via Carnforth. Trains still stop but the pier, washed away and rebuilt several times, is now just a small jetty.

It's a quiet place. Excitement is provided by tourists who have ignored the hooter and all the signs, and have got themselves to the road running between into danger from the fast-rising tides that daily transform the crossed half a mile back. Kent estuary from a sandy haunt of guils and guillemots into a wide and choppy inlet of the sea.

We are going in a circle - so you can do this walk in reverse order if you like. With the Albion at your back, dodge the anglers' rods and tack along the water's edge; first follow a path, then walk along the high water line. (If the water really is high you will need to clamber up the bank and walk parallel to the

shore, through the oak and beech.)

Half a mile or so round the shore - it's fun for twitchers, since the sea fowl are various - you reach New Barns. Either follow the coast, though the path can be muddy, or take a track on the left which seems to be leading into a caravan park. It does, but the saving grace is the way the caravans are screened by trees. The path soon leads into dense woods and, bearing right, a hundred yards or so on from the edge of the caravanserai, you open out at the shore again at White Creek and pick up the path along the coast.

For a mile or so the walk is a delight: wide seascapes on one side, views across to Walney Island to the north west and as far

the Albion sits on a commanding comer in the small Cumbrian town of Arnside and in fine weather the place to water is up, it laps at the foot of the low cliffs. When it is low, it reveals acres of sand and furrowed marsh seeming to stretch across Morecambe Bay to the northern shore. (Yes, there is a path, but the local papers lovingly record the deaths of those

who failed to follow it in the company of the accredited guides.)

Over the cliff edge, the pine boughs twist and curl. Once they Thwaites pub. Thwaites of Blackburn is one of the reasons beer were handholds for marauding Scots who were raiding this coast

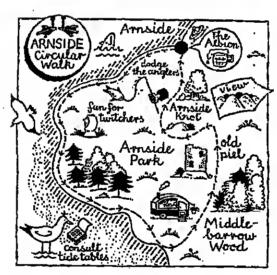
Blow, another caravan park (at Far Arnside) - a vista of washed inn, shabbily comfortable inside, looked over the water flounced curtain and chiniz suites prompting the unoriginal reflection that to some people a holiday consists of attempting to recreate the minutiae of the circumstances of home,

Continue through the Far Arnside hamlet, cross the road and cut diagonally across the next two fields to join a path running under Middlebarrow to the old piel (or peel, the local spelling is various) tower - an anti-Scots device erected in the 14th century. From the farm at the foot of the tower, the track leads up to the road running between Silverdale and Arnside that you

A hundred or so yards along in the Arnside direction, overlooked on the left by a steep cliff, a footpath sign directs you up and over a stile into the pretty woodland that surrounds the Knott. It's National Trust land, well cared for.

It is a fair climb up to the top of the Knott, just over 500ft inside 400 yards, but it is worth the effort, for it offers a magnificent view across southern Lakeland. Once a fat wedge of Lancashire stretched all the way up over the River Kent into southern Lakeland and across to Barrow-in-Furness. Nowadays. part of Cumbria, it lies before you - the villas of Ulverston, the meadows at the foot of Backbarrow, the Kent narrowing on the way to Kendal. To your right the heights of Yorkshire, and ahead a glimpse of the crags around Scafell.

A path leads to the left, down into Arnside, hitting the road just above a big residential home. Either follow the road back down to the Albion, or a steepish path back to the water's edge. Hungry? The baker's next to the pub on its commanding corner site has a small café attached - their home-haked pies are much recommended.



• From the Albion car park walk along the water's edge (if tide is too high clamber up the bank) to New Barns.

 Proceed to White Creek either round coastal path or Inland through caravan park. Take coastal path to Far Arnside – and consult ride timtables first.

 Once through the hamlet, cross road and take path diagonally through two fields to the old piel

 Join road to Arnside and after a hundred yards veer off on footpath to the Knott. A path leads down left on to road to Arnside. Follow this road



#### Duff **Hart-Davis** The discovery that compost may have therapeutic powers has astonished

scientists

nyone with a garden knows how to make compost. But who can turn "green" waste material into a product with an extraordinary natural power to suppress plant diseases such as club-root in hrassicas. brown rot in potatoes and red core in strawberries?

The answer is Eco-Sci, a small company based in Exeter, Although barely three years old, the firm has established itself as a pioneer of composting techniques in the United Kingdom, and has stumbled on a fact which may prove of global significance.

The discovery that compost

has therapeutic powers asionished the firm's scientists. It emerged from field trials in which crops treated with compost not only grew faster but also seemed more resistant to disease. Maize, for instance, produced leaves double the normal size, bigger cobs, and stems less prone to topple over.

Nobody yet understands quite why the compost is soeffective. Laboratory research is in progress both at Eco-Sci and at Excier University, with back-up work going on at the government's Central Science Laboratory; hut tests have yet to establish whether the compost contains chemicals or organisms which are actually killing harmful hacteria, or whether, by promoting rapid root growth and thicker cell walls, it is merely furnishing plants with better resistance to disease.

Eco-Sci's raw material -20,000 tons a year - comes from gardens and municipal parks in Devon, and the handling of it is an impressive operation. A large mobile shredder tours four collection sites and reduces great heaps of branches, shoots, leaves and grass to a coarse pulp. As each load goes into the spinning flails of its jaws, the machine gives an angry rumble, loud as thunder, and spews out pieces of wood to a distance of 60 or 70 yards.

The pulp is then laid out in tapered windrows or banks, four metres wide at the base and 50 metres long. There it remains for about three months, cooking gently. having its temperature taken once a week and being turned by a special machine every fortnight or so. depending on how wer or dry the weather has been. Finally it is put through a

screen, which separates out undigested lumps, and the good stuff goes on to a hig pile, under cover, to mature. By then it looks and smells like fine, dry earth.

The company has begun marketing West Country Compost at a retail price of about £2.45 for a 5tt-litre hag. Yet Eco-Sei's main income is derived from receiving raw material in the first place.

Problems of wastedisposal are already acete. and Devon local authorities pay a substantial gate-fee for every ton of waste dumped at Eco-Sei's sites. In the view of Tom Young, the company's managing director, "there is soon going to be a desperate shortage of holes in the ground", and he believes that the cost of dumping ruhhish, now £20 a ton in many areas, will double over

the next few years. Professional composimaking is thus pressured by an urgent need for innovation, and Eco-Sci is experimenting with new methods of processing ordinary household waste in giant plastic bags known as Eco-pods. Domestic rubbish arrives at its depoi in Plymouth by the truck-load. In theory, the garbage has aiready been sorted by householders into organic and non-organic categories. but the heap I saw being handled, under a swarm of gulls, contained many choice allegedly-putrescible items such as loudspeakers, vacuum cleaners and pairs of trainers.

With these removed by hand, the hulk goes into a shredder-scruncher, and thence is carried by conveyor belt to a rotary trommel screen, which separates out any surviving pieces 25mm or more across. The fine material, known as feedstock, is loaded by a selfpropelled stuffer into a pod - a tube of heavy-duty green plastic 10ft in diameter.

As the stuffer creeps forward, the pod gradually extends and fills like a giant sausage. At its maximum length of 60 metres, one unit can hold 200 tons, and it has numerous advantages over open-air systems. Not only does it contain smells, dust and potential leakage; because temperature is accurately controlled by air blown through the pod, the process of decomposition is accelerated, finishing within eight to 12 weeks. The compost which emerges cannot be sold to gardeners. because it may contain chips of glass; but it is perfectly adequate for landscaping over filled-in sites.

everything that can he saved. to dump as little as possible in the ground. Yet it is compost's natural ability to fight plant disease which most excites Eco-Sci's staff. Already they have

So the race is on to recycle

conducted field trials in Hungary and India, and on Thursday two senior executives returned from an exploratory visit to Egypt. There, it is hoped, their hreakthrough may prove a decisive factor in the battle against brown rot, which has hecome endemic in the country's vital potato crop.

#### Corporate hospitality – a dog's life

Michael Prestage goes sheepdog trialling to relieve executive stress

try house hotels, business executives are getting the chance to try out the latest line in corporate hospitality: that most rural pursuit, sheepdog trialling. Recently, for instance, executives from the communications giant Eriesson were able to swap business suits and power dressing for jeans and sweatshirts and the chance to try the reality of the. BBC's One Man And His Dog.
The BBC programme, now in its

20th year, has made sheepdog trialling universally recognised. fronically, though, the increasing popularity of such events comes at a time when fewer people are training dogs and their use on farms is diminishing as farmers opt for such aids as motorised quad hikes. A shortage of trained sheepdogs

has seen their value soar. At a recent auction at Sennybridge, near Brecon, Powys, 90 dogs were anctioned, including one that reached a record price in Britain of £2,600.

Merion Owen began sheepdog trialling as a 10-year-old, following a tradition started by his grandfather. His father is still one of the leading dog trainers in Wales. "I see no problem with doing corporate events," Merion remarks. "It helps make trialling more popular, and hut some are good. Women tend to

n the grounds of a number of country house hotels, business executives

And so, stood in a field in the grounds of Puckrup Hall Hotel, near Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, Ericsson's finest took it in turns to shout the commands that guided the border collies trained by former Welsh champion Merion Owen, himself a past competitor on the BBC programme.

Working on the farm, Merion would mainly use whistled commands to his dogs as they set about lending his flock of sheep. For the corporate clients, four verbal commands suffice: "bye" to send the dog clockwise, "away" for anti-clockwise, "stand" to stop, and walk".

Eccentrically, a course has also been arranged through which three ducks are guided. It includes a crossroads, a water chute and negotiating a set of gates before the ducks are herded into a box. This is not as difficult as it may sound: the ducks are practically tame and were raised on Wales. However, that most clients succeed in their task owes more to the skill of the dogs and the advice of Merion. Yet it still brings a sense of

achievement Merion said: "It would be quite difficult to let clients try on their own,



Merion's farm at Camarthen, West be better because they listen beforehand and take advice. Some of the men think they know it all already." He admitted that the three dogs he regularly uses know the course and will sometimes do the right thing even if given the wrong command. At husy

times they can be going through their

As one happy participant said, while clutching his shepherd's crook: "This is really good. It is not some-thing I would have the chance to do anywhere else and it is amazing to see how well the dog responds to the commands, even if you have no real idea what you're doing."

Merion puts on similar displays at game shows; it was at a show in Oxford two years ago that he was spotted by Adrian Brown, an organiser of corporate events, who saw an opening for the attraction.

"The days when you could get away with just offering good food and drink are over," Mr Brown explained. "People want to try something different and we have to keep coming up with new ideas. The sheepdog trials are fun, but also give people an insight into the skills involved."

He said the added idea of using ducks was not only practical, but made the whole event something of a novelty. People could have a laugh. And to date nobody has declined to try - an important consideration when one recent client was paying £55,000 a day for the package that included hotel and dinner.

For more details about sheepdog events paces at two or three events a week. call 01267 290282

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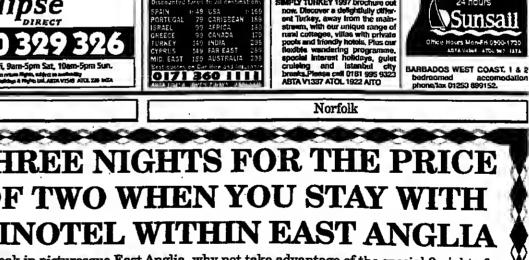
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#### Martin Thompse

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I the of space in the park in This may be a forest, but and printed and sensitive and broad-Here are interspersed with areas in the athland so there are plants or open are as for outdoor action to a particularly good place for fem-Photo a "Squirrel March and an Amendate Play Course And there are of circular, waymarked trails

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back is on foot. A million people a year visit That. torest, yet once you leave the man car park and head off min the minerall, the chances of become and ap in a crowd of fellow hillsen ne marmal If you crave only the come position squirrely, there are lesser. known mark to follow, farming out there a dezem smaller cat forth siles. dette throughout the forest. A map a manufacts available from the High Ladge Visitor Centre Orienteering and alle of the Adults are offered a choice of three levels, accordmy to experience, and a mini-trient-

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o travel is, hopefully, a better thing than to arrive back in the office. For a good definition of the word "tirade", try this; spend a week drifting around the Caribbean, then on Thursday wander back into work and. The proenquire, casually, "Has anything been happening" The salvo of ripe language

by way of response affirmed that, indeed, quite a lot had been going on: snowstorms. the closure of the Landon Underground for three hours because of power cuts, and the tire in the Channel Tunnel. Two components of this

trinity of calamities have diminished, but the third will have long-term repercussions for Britain's travellers. Among them, our illustrator Sally Kindberg (whose work appears on page 13). After her journey from Brussels this week, she vowed "f don't over want to go on Eurostar again." At lunchrime on Tuesday, the fit

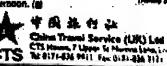
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# The company of squirrels

Martin Thompson visits Thetford Forest Park

last American nuclear bomber has roared away on its final sortic from RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, to the relief of the nightjars and woodlarks which inhabit nearby Thetford Forest Park. Britain's largest lowland forest, it covers 50,000 acres and straddles the border between Suffolk and Norfolk. There are no "Keep out" signs and barbed-wire fences here – it's a people-friendly place complete with visitor centre, shop, café and picnic lawn (an ambitious feature, no doubt, in this weather, but much used in summer).

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1734 (1946).

The use of space in the park is impressive. This may be a forest, but the plantations of conifers and broadleafed trees are interspersed with areas of sandy heathland so there are plenty of open areas for outdoor activities. It's a particularly good place for families. For those with smaller children, there's a "Squirrel Maze" and an Adventure Play Course. And there are miles of circular, waymarked trails that can be explored by bike, on borseback or on foot.

A million people a year visit Thetford Forest, yet once you leave the main car park and head off into the unknown, the chances of becoming snarled up in a crowd of fellow hikers are minimal. If you crave only the company of squirrels, there are lesser known trails to follow, fanning out from a dozen smaller car park sites dotted throughout the forest. A map of these sites is available from the High Lodge Visitor Centre. Orienteering maps are also on sale. Adults are offered a choice of three levels, according to experience, and a mini-orienteering circuit, known as the Squirrel's Scamper, is Thetford's way of introducing children to the sport.

If you have resisted family pressure to fit a bike rack to the car, a range of increase the forest's appeal to visitors of mountain bikes, off-road tandems and trailer hikes are available for hire at High Lodge every day in the summer, and include: deer safaris, fungal forays, trailer hikes are available for hire at and on weekends and in half-term guided bike rides, murder mystery trails weeks during the winter months. The and nocturnal quests to see Thetford's cost of renting a child's mountain bike rare nightjars.

Thetford is managed on behalf of the



Hidden in the trees: 'there are family-orientated activities to entice you to hit the TV off-button'

mercial forestry and nature conservation. The forest may be a £3m a year timber-producing business but part of management time is spent in brainstorming ideas for imaginative events to

Thetford's newly-introduced popul-ation of red squirrels may be in hiberstate by Forest Enterprise, which has the nation, but throughout the winter delicate task of balancing the needs of months there are family-orientated recreational users with those of com- activities here to entice you to hit the the foliage.

TV off-button and line up the wellies beside the front door. These include Twilight Zone guided walks, a chance to see the forest at night, and Suzy Squirrel's Winter Nuts for the under-10s, who are invited to become sleuths tracking down the squirrel's hidden

Our family has become very enthu-Sundays we tend to roam through the forest on our bikes. And a few weeks ago, at Hallowe'en we joined an 80strong group for an evening of ghostly forest tales, with stage-managed sightings of spectral nuns flitting through

There is no need to wait for an organ-ised activity to get the best out of Thetford; you can always do as we did and import your own event. In August, we held our eldest daughter's 10th birthday party in the forest. Tea was consumed on the picnic lawn after an energetic six-mile bike ride. It should have been easy enough to follow the siastic about Thetford Forest Park. On trail, but somehow we still managed to get ourselves lost, if only temporarily. After the ritual cutting of the cake, the girls disappeared for an hour of rope swinging in the adventure playground. The verdict from the hirthday girl? "Brilliant fun ... total exhaustion. The best party I have ever had."

Thetford Forest Park is close to the All ond is less thon 45 ininutes by car from Cambridge, Norwich and Peterborough, The High Lodge Forest Visitor Centre is open during the winter at weekends ond in holf-term weeks, ond every day throughout the summer. Winter events at the park include story-telling (with tales of the forest) at 1.30pm on Sunday. 1 December, a mince pie walk from 10.30am on Sunday 8 December, and o barbecue with carol singing from 1pm on Sunday, 15 December. For more details call 01842 810271. Events cost from £2 for on adult and £1 per child.

For bike hire details, call Flinstone Adventures on 0589 100831.

#### Are we nearly there?

A weekly round-up of outings for children

his is National Tree Week, and communities all over the country are planting forests and showing children how trees contribute to conhealth and environment.

Wear old clothes and gloves to plant a hedge. Meet at The Garden House, St Nicholas Park, Jubilee Rd, Newcastleupon-Tyne Sun 24 November, 10.30ani-12.15pm (0191-284 6884)

#### See how it burns

Enjoy a charcoat burning demonstration, collect acoms to grow oaks and finish with a barbecue (bring your own food and drink). Devictors Wood Trusts Reserve. Perranarworthal (btw Truro and Falmouth) Today 2pm-5pm (0t872-73939)

Know the worst about owls Examine owl pellets to discover the birds' prey, before heading off to the woodland and play area. Ruthern Valley Holidays. Ruthern Bridge, nr Bodmin Sun 24 Nov (D1872-73939)

#### Plant young fruit trees

And decorate ancient oaks. There's also music, crafts, story-telling and a tree trail. All outdoors, so wrap up warm, Meet at Dawston's Hill, Dunstan's Rd, off Upland's Rd, E Dulwich London SE22. Today (0171-278 6612) 12pm-4.30pm

#### Learn from the professionals Pershore College of Horticulture offer Guided tours of their arboretum, and demonstrations of tree-planting. Buy your

own young tree to take home. Avon Bank, Pershore, Hereford, Worcestershire, Today, 10am-4pm (01386 552443)

#### Plant a time capsule ... among the new saplings, Near Scaffeld, W Lotbian, Scotland, Sun 24 November,

11am (01501 822015)

#### Folklore and carving

Get to grips with wood in an activities day which combines tree dressing, puppets, wood carving and hurdle making. Bring refreshments. Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel, Runmore Common, Surrey. Sun 24 November, 10am-4pm (01372-452 528) Adults £10, u-18s £8

Be taken for a ride at Burton-upon-Trent Afterworking to preserve the forest canopy, kids get a ride from Shire Horses. Newton Rd Park, Winshill, Burton-upon-Trent. Today, 10am-3pm (01283 508 598)

Liese Spencer

#### You go away for a week and...

o travel is, hopefully, a Ms Kindberg was in Brussels, better thing than to trying to catch a train to arrive back in the office. For a good definition of the word "tirade", try this: spend a week drifting around the tor, Eurostar, would have con-Caribbean, then on Thursday wander back into work and enquire, casually, "Has anything been happening?"

The salvo of ripe language by way of response affirmed that, indeed, quite a lot had been going on: snowstorms, the closure of the London Underground for three bours hecause of power cuts, and the fire in the Channel Tunnel. Two components of this

trinity of calamities have diminished, but the third will bave long-term repercussions for Britain's travellers. Among want to go on Eurostar again."

trying to catch a train to Waterloo. The fire had taken place the previous evening, so she assumed the train operatingency plans up and running. The problem was, the company didn't seem to have any.

"Nobody knew what was going on. One Eurostar official offered me the numbers of three airlines, but wouldn't let me use his phone." The queue for the public phones was so long that she gave up and waited to find out what Eurostar would do with the hundreds of stranded passengers.

Eventually a plan was hatched. Travellers would go by Eurostar across the French border to Lille, change trains them, our illustrator Sally and bead for Calais. A bus to Kindberg (whose work the docks would connect with appears on page 13). After her a ferry over to Dover. Here, journey from Brussels this waiting coaches would take week, she vowed "I don't ever want to go on Eurostar again." Eurostar train would cover At lunchtime on Tuesday, the final leg to Waterloo,

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Simon Calder

arriving in London by 9.30pm. If the theory of this sixstage journey sounds unappealing, the practice was much, much worse. Early on, the passengers waited an hour at Lille station for the Calais train. To compensate, perhaps, the waiting buses at Calais were super-heated. This would bave been fine - except that the passengers were stuck on the buses for nearly three hours.

It turned out that they were waiting for a SeaFrance ferry. This was a curious choice of Eurostar, since there are two much larger companies -P&O and Stena Line - that

ferry to Dover every hour. better than the voyage. "It seemed to me there were too many people," says Ms Kind-berg. "There were not enough seats, so loads of us ended up sitting on the floor." They had been issued with refreshment vouchers, but these were valid only from one café - which soon sported a queue of ser-

pentine proportions. The search for food became academic. Ms Kindberg lost her appetite when some fellow passengers began a demonstration of synchronised sea-sickness. "Many of them bad chosen the train to avoid the Channel crossing. Some people were getting hysterical."

During the two-hour sailing, ssengers were assured that they would receive a refund on tbeir Eurostar tickets - a promise, says Ms Kindberg, on which the company reneged. But the immediate concern was to reach London.

"We had to change buses between leaving the boat at Dover and reaching Ashford shipping line on the part of station. Then the train took ages to reach Waterloo, where we finally arrived just before 2am. I was lucky because I live each operates at least one in London. Lots of other pas-

sengers who were heading fur-The wait on the coach was ther had serious problems. Eurostar was offering to find hotels for people, hut refused to pay for them. One young French girl who was supposed to be travelling on to York said she was going to spend the night waiting at King's Cross."

Ms Kindberg managed to persuade her against hanging around London's hub of prostitution and low-life, then set about finding a cab bome. By now, fights were breaking out among frustrated passengers arguing over taxis. "One driver told me that there had been plenty of cabs earlier in the night, but they'd all been taken

There was no sign of the romised refund, either. Ms Kindberg finally procured a complaints form, whose small print revealed that she could expect only a free trip on Eurostar. "There's no way 1 want another ticket", she says.

by Eurostar staff to get home."

The strength of feeling in her voice mirrored the reaction when I asked if there had been any travel news of note this week. I would have offered Ms Kindberg some duty-free rum had I not already been obliged to use it to pacify colleagues.



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# Cross-country route to ski heaven

#### Forget the queues for lifts: strike out on your own, says Tina Stallard

he conversion was complete in less than a week. No more downhill: I am giving up lift queues, hulky kit, expensive ski passes and noisy crowds. Cross-country means no more checking my watch for the last cable car, no more impatient skiers hissing to overtake, no more despair about technique. Instead, the delight of exploring a silent forest or following a track through open meadows to a nearby village, the gentle rhythm of gliding on fresh snow.

First impressions were less promising. The Massif Central greeted us with la burle, the cruel north wind feared in this part of France. Dry snow whipped our cheeks and roared past our ears, cold pinched through layers of clothing. Our first steps on skis were taken in the shelter of the woods.

Ankles wobbled in the lightweight boots and heels slid sideways on the skis, secured only at the toe, but the initial unsteadiness quickly disappeared, and we were soon shuffling along, with our skis in the tramlines. Travelling on the flat was easy, and uphill was no problem as the scales on the base of the ski gripped the snow, but going downhill was terrifying. My skis seemed to be locked in the tracks as I accelerated out of control. Only by lifting the skis out of the tramlines is it possible to start braking, but the theory was quite overtaken by pure panic.

After many mouthfuls of snow, and patient guidance from our instructor, I developed a fairly effective snowplough, which allowed me to study other people's

Roger, a har owner from Beaujolais, showed the most originality. He stayed in the tracks, crouching lower as he picked up speed. With his bottom dragging in the snow he rocked from side to side, apparently hoping this would slow him. But the act of crouching served to increase his speed. The rocking movement became so extreme he eventually caught an elbow in the snow and catapulted off the track. We found him in a snowdrift, looking both relieved and shocked,

Roger's wife, Pierrette, was more cautious: after studying each slope we came to, she began to remove her skis and said she would walk down. Persuaded to ski, she set off with a concession to the snowplough, theo as the speed took over, abandoned the pretence, waving her arms wildly hefore tumbling at our feet with screams of

As we sprawled across the tracks, we were overtaken by the experts. Shimmering in Lycra suits, they glided past with effortless, rhythmic skating steps, pushing out first on one leg, then the other. Each step is an act of



PHOTOGRAPH: TINA STALLARD

on one ski. As the momentum slows, the other ski takes over just in time. The grace of their swaying movement enchanted me and I was determined to learn the pas de patineur, or skating step, hefore the end of the week.

When la burle had died down, we crept out of the woods to the open slopes. The rounded mountains of woods to the open slopes. The rounded mountains of the Massif Central stretched away from us, and in the or a sauna, then a doze with a novel. There were other distance the light sparkled on the jagged peaks of the Alps, with Mont Blanc shining above them. The Alps are mere babes in comparison with the slopes we stood on: volcanoes which erupted some 10 million years ago. Time has smoothed their contours, and the summits curve gently before running through pine forests down into the valleys.

We were staying in the tiny village of Les Estables, not far from Le Puy. Apart from a couple of hotels set up for cross-country skiing and summer walking, most of the small stone houses belong to farmers. Our hotel, La Découverte, was refreshingly informal: we helped ourselves to drinks at the bar and signed for them, and meals were eaten at a long table - guests and hotel staff

rusty French, and with liberal quantities of Franglais, it served us well. Conversation was lively and we traded the inevitable Irish jokes for the French equivalent, jokes about the long-suffering Belgians.

Après-ski was limited to three rather gloomy bars in possibilities, such as a ride in a sledge pulled by husky dogs bred at a nearby farm, or exploring the area on snowbikes. These trips were fun, but the best moments were on the slopes after the first bruises had disappeared and I tried out a few tentative skating steps. Next year perhaps I shall consider a Lycra suit.

A week at La Découverte in the peak month, February, costs about £400, which includes all meals, cross-country. skis and boots, and tuition. Phone the sister hotel also called La Découverte, at St Bonnet: 00 33 471 59 94 42 Alternatively, Waymark Holidays (01753 516477) specialises in cross-country skiing. A week at Les Estables; faith, as the entire weight of the body is carried forward together. The communal meals forced us to resurrect from £535.

#### Langlauf - the lowdown

o its purest form, cross-country skiing represents the true freedom of the mountains. Nowadays many Alpine hamlets feel obliged to offer a Langlauf Loipe of some kind, but this is often a track prepared by snowmohile along a sunless valley floor with views of purpose-huilt amenities rather than open snowscapes.

However, even if you take this option, there's still quite a bit to be said for cross-country skiing. The skis are featherlight, the boots as soft as trainers and the clothing as unrestricting as a tracksuit. And the cardiovascular benefit is high.

By comparison with downhill skiing, cross-country is easy. Attaching skis by a single clip at the toe of the boot means that you can expect to fall flat on your face as soon as you lean forward into a downhill slope, hot getting up is relatively effortless and the learning curve is fast.

There are two techniques: the classic glide, with the skis in single parallel tracks, and the skating method, now used in Olympic competition because it is much quicker.

Cross-country skiing is also green and cheap, but why do people stick to the beaten track rather than venture into mountains untouched by tourism? The main European skiing countries have adventure alternatives to downhill skiing which, typically, allow you to stay in family-run hotels in villages rather than soulless resorts. This brings a high pay-off io terms of price and

The two main specialists in the cross-country market are Inntravel and Headwater, each offering Nordic holidays in Norway, France, Switzerland and Italy. The logical choice is Norway, a huge, underpopulated snow zone where crosscountry skiing is a national passion. When offices close in Oslo, citizens pour on to floodlit tracks for an evening burnam. At weekends. they enter all comers races that attract as many as 10,000 starters.

This fervour works in favour of guided holidays in assorted hackwaters, some within striking distance of Oslo, some far to the north of the Arctic Circle. Headwater has all-inclusive cross country trips to Venabu, a village with a 13th-century church 50 miles to the north of Lillehammer. Their resident British guide husts daily expeditions on terrain that includes sheltered forest trails and open mountains. Inntravel ventures further afield, to the Hardanger Plateau above the fjords in western Norway and even to the Lofoten Islands, a remote fishing outpost with spectacular mountains, off the coast near Narvik.

In France, the smart get-away-from-it-all optinns are the Jura, the Massif Central and the Pyrences, but escape is also possible in the Alps. The pick of the Headwater pack are Pailherols in the wilds of the western
Auverge, to the south of Clermont
Ferrand, and Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, a
traditional village in Haute-Savoie
near Geneva. Inntravel offers La Cure in the Jura above Lake Geneva, Ceillac in the Queyras National Park in Haute Savoie. and La Llagonne and Valcebollère on the forested Cerdagne plateau in the Pyrences.

Headwater Holidays (01606 48699; fax 48761): Venabu Fjellhowl, Ringebu, from £626: Auberge des Montagnes, Pailherols, from £297, self drive, or £449, ruil or air;ruil, (prices include travel as specified, transfers as required 7 nights' full board, equipment & tuition/guiding). Inntravel (01653 628811: fax 628741): Ustuoset Hotel, Ustaoset, from £525 (air/rail travel, 7 nights half board, plus hinch pack): Hotel Cascade, Ceillac, from £479 (travel by Eurostar, 7 nights half board). Snow and Rock (01932 569569; fax 569568): cross-country recreational package, boots, skis, bindings & poles, £149.50, from the shops or by mail order.

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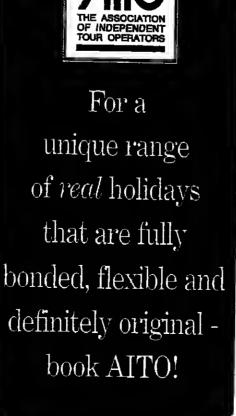


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# An odyssey of cheers and tears

Arnie Wilson and his girlfriend Lucy Dicker skied 10 miles a day for 365 days with 790 vertical miles in 240 resorts around the world. Then tragedy struck. By Stephen Wood

n 1 January 1994. 49-year-old Arnie Wilson set off with his girl-friend on an adventure. They skied at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, that day. The following morning they left, with the intention of skiing every day for the whole year, at an average of 10 miles. the whole year, at an average of 10 miles a day and in as many different resorts as

Their itinerary was to take them all around the world, following the snow from Japan to Chile, from India to New Zealand. And on 1 January, 1995, they were back in Jackson Hole, the adventure completed.

By skilfully negotiating airline timetables, taking advantage of the warp that the International Date Line puts on the calendar, and skiing at four o'clock in the morning when necessary, they had

achieved their target.

By New Year's Eve, in Keystone, Colorado, they had skied every day of their year, and reached the 10-miles-a-day average; their diary also recorded that they had skied in 240 resorts, travelled 109,480 miles (four times around the globe) and descended 790 vertical miles (144 times down Mount Everest) - and that Arnie had had 178 falls, to his girlfriend's 180.

The story of their experiences is told in Arnie Wilson's book, to be published next week. It is called Tears in the Snow, because the adventure had a tragic postscript. On 6 April last year, Arnie's 41-year-old girlfriend, Lucy Dicker, was killed in a skiing accident at La Grave, in France.

Arnie Wilson took up skiing seriously only at the age of 30. A dedicated tobogganist as a child, when his family lived in Switzerland, he had – as he thought –

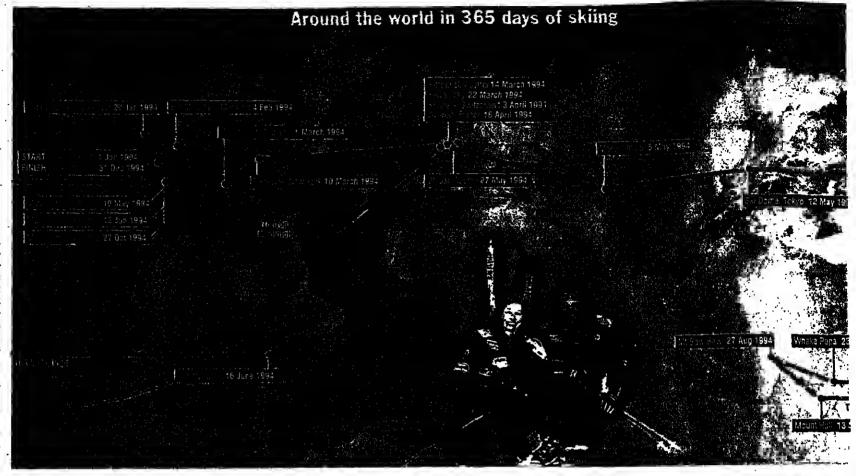
learnt to ski on a school trip in his teens. So when be took his own family to Verbier, with a commission to write an article for a skiing magazine, he had what he describes as "that dangerous combination of ego, enthusiasm and lack of ability. At the end of the first day I had to be rescued by the piste patrol and brought down

After that trip, he spent as much time skiing as his job - as a reporter for the old Southern TV region - would allow. Something of a local celebrity, he was often asked to open fêtes ("if the weatherman and the studio presenter had said no"); and company policy was to allow a day off in lieu for such appearances. "So every time I opened a fête, I got a day's skiing." In 1984 he went freelance and was asked to do some skiing articles for the Financial Times. When its regular skiing columnist died. Arnie inherited the joh, which he has now held for 10 years.

It was the travel editor 10 years.
in 1990, floated the possibility of sking in

every month of the year. Atmie wrote a fictional account of such a venture for the magazine, and then toyed with the idea of making it fact, "It was just a silly idea," he says - until he mentioned it to Lucy, a Frenchwoman who worked as general manager for a ski tour company in London, and with whom he was already having an affair. "It was almost as if it was what she had been waiting for: Lucy always dreamed of having a great adventure. When she said, 'Let's do it together', it became a possibility. And then it gathered its own momentum."

They were an unlikely pair of adven-



turers: she was short-sighted but too vain to wear glasses; he was overweight; and both seemed to have had a limitless ability to get lost - not just driving at night in a hailstorm on New Zealand's Mount Hutt, but even in their own hotel. The book details the calamities ("It makes a better story when things don't go smoothly" says Arnie), including their truck blowing up in Argentina, Arnie carrying on skiing despite wearing a catheter to deal with a urinary problem, desperate (but always successful) attempts to find a place to ski when the light was fading and the snow melting - and, much more distressing to read, the terrible rows they had. Arnie was adamant that the book should be true to Lucy's memory, and this

involved being as frank about how diffi-cult she could be, as about his love for her.

Of course, they skied some great runs: the "outrageous" (Arnie's description) off-piste Ridge area of Bridger Bowl, Montana, a long swoop from 8,000ft; the Vallée Blanche, a 6,500ft vertical down the glacier from Mont Blane to Chamonix, and the silky, serious powder of Mount Dobson in New Zealand, a 3,500ft vertical which Lucy thought was the greatest run of her life.

But their experiences won't convert many to summer skiing, particularly in India (where they found no working skilifts) and Japan (where they clocked up two hours' skiing on Tokyo's indoor snowpiste, and then £100 on a cab fare into

town). Chile is obviously a much better bet - except when you have to do the same run down a volcano about 40 times, on hard-packed snow, to keep up the 10miles-a-day average. Arnie admits that it was a struggle, "but I think we thrived on that. The more it went wrong, the more -in a strange way - we enjoyed it. Lucy. particularly, seemed to relish the struggle." In retrospect, he thinks the adventure was "a 100 per cent wonderful idea. I am very proud that we did it, and very sad that Lucy only had three months in which to relish her success."

Writing about it, however, was "a nightmare". He started writing with Lucy. He made a second start after her death, during months of terrible grief - "I kept ask-

ing myself, 'If people die of a hroken heart, why am I still alive?'" Skiing again, he says, started him on "the long haul back to sanity"; and the help of another writer. William

Hall, enabled him to complete the book. "With each process - writing, rewriting. proof-reading - I found that at the begin-ning of the book I was happy, because I was with Lucy again, planning our adven-ture, I didn't once think that she was alive; yet I felt the warmth that I associated with being with her. But every time I worked on the last two chapters, I could hardly see the screen through my tears."

Tears in the Snow: a True Story of Love. Courage and Danger' is published on 29 November (Blake Publishing, £15,99).

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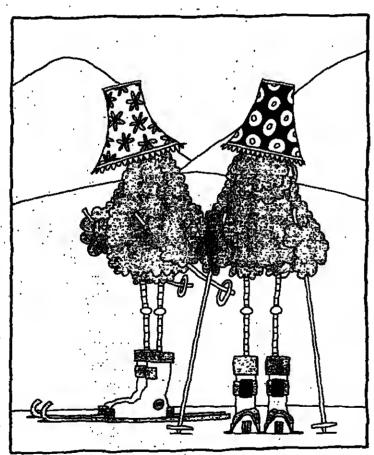
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# money & homes

Motoring: the march of the clones ......26 A new look at Christmas-gift clichés.....30

# Paying for the privilege

Loyalty cards may cost more than you realise, warns Nic Cicutti

ativity cards from Uncle Roy and Auntie Hazel are plopping through the letter box. Santa is waiting for customers in his greater additional and all the santa is waiting for customers. The key question is: how do we use our oewin his grotto, plaintive carol singers accost you in the street – and the kids want a mountain bike each. And a new Sony play station, please. And what about all the food and drinks? Merry

Christmas, it's that time of year again.
A time when, like it or not, plastic cards are repeatedly used in the search for a few hours' happiness. Despite all the new year's resolu-tions in the world, it is virtually impossible to get through the holiday season without adding hundreds of pounds to our debts.

At such times, resigned users can comfort themselves with the knowledge that, by using the right card, they are at least ensuring a small extra bonus out of it. Credit card companies know this. That is why they spend vast amounts of time devising the right type of loyalty package, aimed at ensuring that it is their plastic friend we use and no-one else's.

A study by Steve Worthington, a professor at Staffordshire University, details the incredible effort that eard issuers go to to ensure we spend money through them alone. In the past 20 months more than 20 million supermarket cards have been issued, while 13 million people have petrol loyalty cards. Of the 30 million credit cards in circulation, 55 per cent are linked to loyalty programmes.

The purpose of loyalty cards is to prevent us from shopping around and hring to an end our car-engendered "prumiscuity" with several slores or payment methods. Research shows that "loyal" shoppers spend twice as much as "promiscuous" ones, while in the grocery sector, loyalists have larger budgets and their sprees are up to four times greater than their pickier counterparts.

"Companies are [therefore] developing schemes that are no longer mere add-ons to card-based programmes," Professor Worthington says. "If a card-based loyalty programme does not offer significant personal gain for the consumer, it will lose wallet share'."

The use of cards also allows suppliers to build a detailed profile of customer likes and dislikes.

allowing them to tailor their products. According to Professor Worthington, this in of their value to suppliers and they expect to be rewarded for their patronage. "Loyalty is a

found consumer power to best effect? The sludy, spoosored by The GM Card, linked to the car manufacturer, offers some tips.

First, before deciding on rewards, customers should be certain they know what the costs of a scheme are most importantly the interest rate. scheme are, most importantly, the interest rate. Some payment cards will have fees attached to them, while others offer oo interest-free period. If you roll up debt on your card, this is not a problem. If you are a prompt payer, it is.

Second, where rewards are being considered, customers need to decide whether they want to redeem their points only through the issuer or whether they prefer a third-party alternative. Remember also that there may be special

offers. Contrary to claims made by The GM Card, it is possible to obtain greater discounts through special offers with Trustcard than simply looking at the points system. On a £3,000 spend, Barclaycard offers £150 off a Ford, compared to £90 with Vauxhall's GM Card.

Also, it helps to decide whether you want a wide choice of rewards. With The GM Card, there is one: a hefty discount on new Vauxhall cars. Barclaycard not only offers reductions on Fords, but a large range of other gifts.

Professor Worthington points out that loyalty programmes need not be mutually exclusive and it is possible to divide one's support

between, say, petrol and grocery cards.

"Consumers are also double-dipping," he says. "This means they double the value of their rewards by using both a payment and a nonpayment card in tandem. Thus, buying at a supermarket or petrol station, the double-dipper uses the supplier's loyalty card to gain rewards based on his or her patronage whilst at the same time using a payment card that offers double rewards."

Large organisations use the knowledge they gain of our spending habits to target us with what they believe we will want. Of course, this depends on whether we want to play their game.

advice - that of getting the best APR deal for our money. It is well-known to a discerning minority of customers that the cheapest credit turn allows customers to become more aware comes not from the large card issuers, such as Barclaycard, Nai West or even TSB. One of the best APR rates comes from Royal Bank of



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Take Professor Worthington's first piece of MasterCard. Alternatively, Robert Flem- of total spend, it makes sense to find the cheaping/Save & Prosper has the base rate-linked card, which is pegged at 5 points above base rates, giving an APR of 11 per cent. The bank's

there is a £12 annual fee. When you consider that at best, the likely

est APR rather than pay 19 per cent or more to get the toaster or cuddly toy you wanted.

Of course, there is always the nuclear option Visa and MasterCards charge 14.6 per cent, but - it might just be possible to heed that new year's resolution and refuse to take part in the spending madness. You may be a lot better off two-way street and information and rewards. Scotland, which charges 14.5 per cent on its benefit from a loyalty programme is 3 per cent for it, both spiritually and financially.



#### fear of finance

in Britain at managing their own money? This, apparently, is the conclusion of a report carried out oo behalf of IFA Promotion, a group which promotes independeot financial advice.

The research, carried out by Mintel, a well-respected or-ganisation, shows Londoners have lost track of more than £2,000 each on average. By contrast, their West Midlands counterparts have lost sight of just £1,400 apiece. People living in the South-east of England do not be seen as the seen and the seen as land do not know the where-abouts of £1,900 each.

The lost money referred to, more than £77bn for the whole of the UK, is an estimate of all the forgotten and unclaimed cash sloshing around in bank, building and friendly society accounts, National Savings, stocks and

Of course, reports like this have an ulterior motive. IFA Promotion regularly comes up with similar wheezes. The aim of the exercise is to direct us to one of its advisers, who will helpfully guide us on how to invest this money - or any mooey we may have, for that matter. Even so, there is something here to make us sit up and listen.

The report points out that, while some of the money would be hard to access, about £14bn of it simply lies in dor-mant or obsolete building society accounts. Even if they think they know where their money is, and many have forgotten, savers are receiving pitiful rates of interest on their deposits.

Some £1.6bn languishes on National Savings extension rates, far less generous than the amount normally paid, and National Savings is not the most generous organisation in the first place.

from inheritance money left to rot for years in bank or building society accounts. Life assurance policies which have matured and await collection chalk up a further £1.9bn.

Whenever someone says

re Londoners the worst they want to make investors money "work harder" for them, I feel slightly queasy. I find it hard not to come up with mental images uf little £5 notes on steroids, dementedly racing round a gym 10 build up their puny muscles.

But there is no denying that, despite its self-interested style, IFA Promotiun has a

Next week, millions of us will switch on our televisions and buy newspapers to discover what the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, has decided to do in his Budget. Mr Clarke's announcements will delight some, anger others and leave most of us unmoved. Foreign observers have often remarked huw peculiarly British the entire affair is.

The combination of macro-economic policy, coupled with more down-to-earth decisions about fags, petrol and booze, is ooe of the few times when the vast majority of us are willing to entertain serious debate on financial issues.

Not fur une minute should we get rid uf any of this, But we should, never the less, get things in perspective. While Mr Clarke's penny un here and tuppence off there will make a real difference to uur lives, it is also a fact that what might make as much difference is a touch mure planning in our financial affairs.

For many, this will seem a meaningless proposition: what is there to plan about if you are a pensioner or long-term unemployed person on state benefits?

A fair point. But it is also true that a little planning along with a little more money, to be sure - can help most people. The first step we might want to take is to sift through all the papers left mouldering for years in draw-An extra £3.36bn comes ers and attics throughout the

That way, irrespective of Mr Clarke's pre-election giveaways, that long-forgotten policy might still ensure a nice lit-

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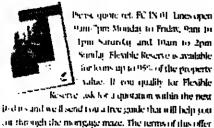
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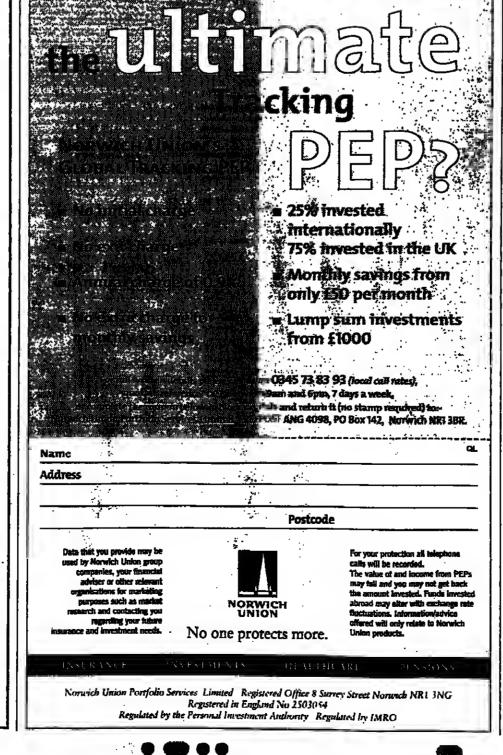


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### The crash didn't see

My biggest mistake

Investment guru Bob Beckman

y biggest mistake was m May 1972, when I predicted the Financial Times 30-share index, which was the main stock market measure at the time, would go through 700.

The index had just moved above the 520 level for the larity contests if you're right first time in about eight years, and I thought that move was pointing to much higher prices to come. What happened was that the index rose another 25 points, and then turned around and plunged. Between May 1972 and January 1976, it lost nearly 70 per That particular mistake

didn't really cost me that much money in terms of my own personal investments, but h has been used as a whip for the media to beat me for the past 24 years. The media started tn pay

attention to my work in the late 1960s, and one of my forecasts was that the FT30 would reach the level of 520, oot go much higher and then fall to 300 before reaching a

tract of employment if this is simply stated as a discretionary right on the part of the company. But I can under-stand the fears of employees

who may fear that they are

losing a right to something,

even if it does not amount to

Mr Whiting says that while taxman can still examine the

overall redundancy payment between the individual and

the company to determine

whether part of the payoff is made up of Pilot, this option may still be the best available. Union experts argue that

where salary in lieu of notice is not a discretionary arrange-

ment, a separate deal

whereby a person waives this right at the moment of redun-

dancy in return for a sepa rately enhanced payoff is the

best alternative. However,

this is likely to come under

even tighter - and negative -

level of 520 again. In other it. I began to question myself words, I was saying a bear on why. How could I possibly market was imminent - and it miss one of the worst receswas. It happened. But I was in sions we'd seen since the disagreement with everyone So I started to examine a else. You don't win any popularity contests for being right

when everybody else is right. When that bear market hit bottom at 305 in February 1970. I became very bullish and said: 'Now is the time to buy shares, when everybody else is bearish.' And I was right again. The index got up to the 520s in May 1972, and then, because I thought they'd climb further, I was finally.

ruefully wrong.

Journalists said: 'Now is the time to develop a contrary Beckman indicator. Beckman was bullish at the very, very top, so whenever Beckman is bullish, turn bearish, and whenever Beckman is bearish, turn bullish.' That went on for years, and it all started with that one bad forecast.

when that 1972-1975 ment and the economy. It and with my own personal Winne, £14.95), I recession hit. I didn't expect taught me that I didn't know money, I just didn't like the ing to Paul Slade,

Great Depression?

lot of the economic tools which I had been using and the financial tools which had given me that target of 700 for the 30-share index. I started to question it and began to look at some of the long-term cyclical economists that I didn't pay too much attention to while I was at university. I should have been paying attention, because they were the type of people who would have been able to forecast the 1972-75 recession.

As a result of that, I changed my way of economic thinking. I abandoned all the micro-economic tools I had been using, and started looking at the economy on a much to look at long-term cyclical trends. It was a real watershed in my approach to the investeverything and that I should look at things in a much broader scope, which I have been doing ever since. It's made me much more cautious and much more conservative. And I haven't made a

forecasting error of anything like that magnitude since. I forecast the 1987 Crash 10 days before it happened on LBC and in my publication, Investors' Bulletin. So many penple claim to have pre-dicted the 1987 Crash, it's hard to believe how it could ever have happened. But I did forecast it, and that's well-documented. On the surface, everything in the UK and US equity markets looked fairly calm. But, beneath the surface, there was a tremendous amount of turbulence. Technically, it just looked like it was crumbling, and big divergences were building up between the leading indices

and the broad market. I had sold out before then, because I'm a value investor.

values that equities were offering. I didn't sell out because I saw a Crash was coming. I sold out because 1 liked bond markers better.

What I try to explain to people is that markets are non-linear dynamic systems. That means today's influence may not be the same as tomorrow's influence. Today we may have share prices going up because interest rates fall. Next week we may have them going up because interest rates do the opposite. There is no such thing as a fixed cause and effect. The only hitching post an investor has is value. When he sees markets offering good value, good yields, good dividend covers, reasonable price camines ratios, that's the time to be there. When he sees markets that affer poor relative values, the investor should pull in his horns."

"Housequake" (Rushmere Winne, £14.95). He was talk-

# Taxmen give notice on redundancy pay

Employees will lose out, writes Nic Cicutti

undreds of thousands of people facing the grim prospect of redundancy may be hit even harder by an additional tax sting from the Inland Revenue, unless action is taken now to minimise the blow.

Revenue officials say they intend to tax payments in lieu of notice made to staff who are made redundant. This much stricter interpretation of tax rules, announced in August, is part of the taxman's bid to claw back some of the estimated £1.5bn foregone each year from payments made to staff who lose their

At present, employees do not have to pay tax on the first-£30,000 of their redundancy

ayoff. This is the statutory amount based on gross salary, age and number of years' service. Maximum payments are £205 a week, up to a total of £6,150. But many companies. either through union pressure or because they feel generous. have redundancy agreements considerably in excess of this

When employees lose their top up any redundancy payment with the salary normally one, three or six months the Special Commissioners, worth of money. As long as arbitrators in tax matters. The the combined amount was under the £30,000 limit, no

tax was levied on it. always contested this practice, arguing that payments in lieu One common device is to of notice (or Pilots, as experts call them) are part of a separate contractual agreement between a company and its wise, from employees' conclearly. employee and therefore subtracts of employment.

In August, the taxman



be hit with an extra sting from the Revenue

month later, Thorn EMI lost a case linked to the same issue paid in lieu of notice, be that which it had argued before side company is considering an

appeal to the High Court. The upshot has been a mad The Inland Revenue has scramble by employers to get round the new restriction. remove any reference to Pilots, whether at the company's discretion or other-

pounced. The Revenue said it unable to argue that any no longer intended to permit notice paid to staff alongside jobs, employers will usually Pilots to be untaxed. One their redundancy payments forms part of a contractual agreement between both John Whiting, a tax partner

at Price Waterhouse, the chartered accountants, and also chairman of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, says: pre-emptive strike against these payments. I suppose we should at least be grateful that they have decided to stake out their position so

"It makes eminent sense to Employers hope that by strike out such a clause [of that may not be further than

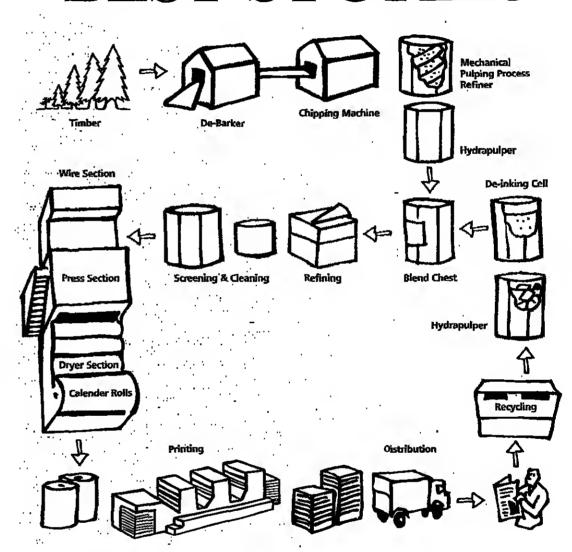
Revenue scrutiny. A company always had the right to deny Pilots to staff, forcing them to work out their notice instead, however unlikely in the event of redun-

But staff should seek to ensure that in the event of a successful High Court challenge by Thorn EMI or another firm, their employer will reinstate the Pilot provision in their contracts, discretionary or otherwise.

The key question is whether a firm will continue "The Revenue's position is a to make such payments even though they are no longer even referred to as a discretionary option in the contract of employment.

Ultimately, it all comes down to how much you trust your boss. In today's climate, doing so, the Revenue will be pay in lieu of notice] in a con- you can throw him.

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# The Chancellor sharpens his axe

On Tuesday, the Budget will be handed down. Nic Cicutti asks what is likely to be sacrificed

s with so many other annual rituals, the Budget is almost Hupoo us. Ahead of it will come the pundits' predictions, followed shortly afterwards by the briefest of sbrugs when their fore-

casts turn out to be totally wrong. It is still useful to examine some of the options available to the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, if only so that should he rule against some of the more painful measures, it will almost seem as if he has done us a big favour.

Most experts believe this is likely to be an intensely political Budget, with the City's expectations of finaocial probity tempered by strong electoral imperatives.

Not that it has halted furious lobbying by interest groups. The Char-tered Institute of Taxatioo, experts in tax law, have loog argued for a simplified system.

David Frost, presideot of the CTL says: "Urgent reforms are required, including a simplification of tax bands, a review of legislatioo covering employee benefits in kind and a commitment to integrate National Insurance contributions and income tax."

While root-and-branch reform is

cut the basic rate of income tax, possibly by a penny or two, bringing it further down towards the 20 per cent target set by the Conser-

vatives several years ago. However, there is little hope that be will take millions of people out of the tax net altogether, by raising the personal allowance threshold significantly above £3,765 or increasing the 20 per cent tax ceiling beyond £3,900 on top of that. After all, there are precious few votes to be gained from such a

More likely are changes designed to ease the Capital Gains Tax burden faced by some investors oo profits from the sale of shares and second bomes.

CGT is fiendishly complicated to calculate and administer. The first £6,300 of realised profits are free of CGT and, in any case, it is possible to minimise the tax further.

The Government has said that it would like to simplify and, if pos-sible, abolish CGT completely. Politically, it would also send the right message to potential Tory

Options bere include reducing the CGT rate or giving more relief unlikely, Mr Clarke is expected to to assets held for longer periods,

#### The hope

- Reduction in basic-rate tax by at least 1 per cent
- Rise in personal tax allowance above inflation Abolish I per cent stamp duty on house purchases above
- Scrap or increase £200,000 IHT ceiling Abolish or simplify CGT
- Increase investments in PEPs from £6,000 to £7,500 and single-company PEPs to £5,000

theoretically rewarding "responsible" long-term investors. Another area the Government may tackle is Inheritance Tax

(IHT). Last year, Mr Major indicated he wanted to scrap IHT. Mr Clarke raised the limit helow which IHT need not be paid oo a dead persoo's estate (iocluding property) from £140,000 to £200,000.

Raising IHT levels, while seemingly generous, need oot affect



What they fear and what they expect from Mr Clarke

well below the current £200,000 raxfree limit.

One area where the Government may continue its inexorable march is the long-running reduction of mortgage tax relief (Miras). This has already suffered under successive Chancellors, having been cut from the marginal rate of tax to just 15 per cent by 1994. The £30,000 mortgage limit for Miras has been frozen for years.

Last year, Mr Clarke's hand was buge oumbers, as most of us inherit temporarily stayed by a housing

#### The fear

- Increase in insurance pre-Slash tax-free redundancy
- entitlements Increase in employers' National Insurance contribu-
- Reduce or end mortgage tax Remove tax breaks from
- pension contributions Limit tax relief on popular PEPs nr Tessas

market in crisis. This year, prices have picked up and he may not be

feeling so geoerous. Paradoxically, the effect of a reductioo in Miras may have a very minor effect on mortgage leoders' tendency to raise home loan interest rates. After the receot rise in base rates, most lenders said they would reserve judgement on whether to follow suit on mortgages until they digested the City's verdict oo the Budget

While unlikely, there may be a

calculation in some quarters that a still-fragile housing market could ill-afford a combined attack from the Chancellor on Miras, plus an immediate raise in rates.

For potential home buyers who feel that the Chancellor is set to give away all bar the kitchen sink, thereby prompting the City to demand higher interest rates, fixing

now is key. While the Chancellor is unlikely to widen breaks for tax-free investments such as persocal equity plans, he may act to rescue two forgotten higher-risk investments -Venture Capital Trusts and Enterprise Iovesimeni Schemes - that have not proved universally popular. Some experts hope the Gov-criment may increase VCT and E1S tax breaks from 20 to 40 per cent, in line with the marginal rates

paid by many of their most likely For the rest of us, the hope is that Mr Clarke does oot home in on easy taxes that have a high, but hid-

den effect oo our liviog standards. One such levy is Insurance Premium Tax (1PT), charged at a rate of about 3 per ceot on anything from AA membership to travel

Despite claims in 1993, when IPT was introduced, that it would cost an average family just £18 a year, the real figures are at least twice and perhaps three times that amount. The industry fears a doubling of IPT, leading to significantly higher iosurance bills.

Saody Dunn, managing director for Touchline Insurance, said: "A notable rise in motor insurance premiums across the industry is inevitable in the coming months. The fact that premiums have been kept artificially low by competitive pressures bas already forced some players to leave the market.

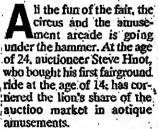
"A rise in IPT would make the burden of rising premiums even greater for the consumer. Doubling levels would add another £10 to the average motor policy."

Mr Dunn warned that nne sideeffect of such a rise would be to accentuate a trend among young or less well-off motorists towards

cheaper third party-only insurance. Whichever way the Chancellor moves next Tuesday, he prepared for some sleight of hand. Headlinegrabbing tax cuts are one thiog but it needs to be paid for somehow. One way or another, it will come out of our own pockets,

# Win on the swings and roundabouts

John Windsor on riches to be found at the fair



An Edwardian handcranked roundabout with 12 carved wooden horses in original paint, suspended on brass barley-twist rods, fetched £6,000 last year at one of his quarterly auctions of fairground art and slot machines. A circus trapeze safety net made £25, a Thirties Mills ooc-armed baodit £700 - and ten tons of mixed elephant and horse manure a fiver. (The pile had been rotting nicely since Gerry Cottle sold the elephants four years ago, but the ione bidder has yet to carry off his scoop).

Fairground art - whose brightly painted carved animals and gold rococo scrollwork makes it one of the most rohust genres of Victoriao popular art - is getting scarcer and scarcer. Showmen's yards, where dismantled rouodabouts and swingboats were stored for the winter then finally abandoned, have been plundered by dealers, says Mr. Hunt. "There are oo great finds left." he reckons.

Only 50 of the 400 lots at his next quarterly sale on Sunday I December at 1pm at the Colville School at Cherry Hinton, Cambridgeshire, are fairground art, the rest mostly amusement machines. Uotil this year he could expect double that number of fairground pieces. Among the few oo offer are five roundabuut animals carved to the Forties or Fifties - including a pig, a cockerel and a horse, expected to fetch £600-£700 each.

Last year saw the 18th and final auction of carved fairground animals and carousel art at Brillscote Farm, in Wiltshire. Before going under the hammer, the stock used to earn its keep oo bire to film studios. Grierson Gower, cofounder uf Brillscote Farm Auctions, said the business rate, levied on showmen's

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much more than the surrender value.



Lots of interest: Buyers at an auction of fairground equipment

exorbitant.

yards and even parked fairground wagons, had been the last straw. There was nowhere else for

the rides to be stored. Now. they re practically all gone." You might think that nostalgia would drive collectors and dealers to compete hotly for the diminishing supply of

fairground art. Hardly.

Collectors and dealers at Mr Hunt's auctions do not appear eager to drive up prices. They are niggardly bidders. They eye each other like hawks and have developed the babit infiniating to auctioneers - of allowing goods to go unsold then crowding to the auctioneer's rostrum to broach aftersale deals at low prices.

1907 fairground Cake Walk (jigging platform), ooe of only five left, was haggled over for three months after a sale last year before changing hands at \$1,000.

Pub outfitters do occasiooally boost bidding. A ghost train's Bride of Dracula in coffee, in working order with sound effects, fetched £510. and will no doubt recoup the outlay by reminding customers to order Bloody Marys. A twoheaded calf, one of several Despite the finicky bidding,

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itisfy our selection criteria. FAX: 0181 207 4950 AP SECURITISED ENDOWNENT CONTRACTS PLC
MM SEC House, 49 Thiobaid St., Bonstanmood, Hurs, W26, 48.2 the quarterly auctions of Mr 50p. But the spinning drum Hunt's Antique Amusement Company are the biggest in Europe - big enough to get him barred from the village hall at Stow-cum-Quy, Cambridgeshire, where his £5 entrance fee (admits two, free catalogue) was considered

These are serious auctions," he retorts, "not occasions for locals to drink tea". His own private collection is the talk of the trade. At one of his own auctions last year, be put in the winning bid of £4,000 for an 1895 Gavioli organ, once the centrepiece of a galloper roundabout.

The set of six Edwardiao solid oak adult swing-boats with unique brass hanging rods was almost unooticed in an auction in Norfolk, carelessly catalogued as "child's swing. boat". Having paid £510 for it and restored it, Mr Hunt says he would not be parted from

it at any price. He tours his slot machines in a trailer pulied by a Land Rover. Punters pay £1 for 20 old pennies. It does not matter much if they nick a few: replacements cost only £30. per 1,000 in the trade.

The 1890-model Winchester repeater rifles in his shooting gallery fire live ammunition. It was not the regulation of the supply of live ammunition in switch to air rifles, he says, but taxman had access to ammo right: around two billion. suppliers' receipts, revealing bought from them.

temperamental candy floss Auctions shop 21a Camden machine Bought for £1,000 it Passage, London N1 (0171promised big profits from spun 359-2597), warehouse 127 Pansugar on a stick costing only 4p cras Road, London NW1 a go to make and selling for (0171-387 6039).

that throws molteo sugar through a wire mesh demands skilful manipulation. At first, in Mr Hunt's inexperienced hands it went out of control. draping the walls of his parents' kitchen with sticky pink

His most cherished relic is the only surviving fragment of William Taylor's Bioscope, or travelling cinema, of 1903-4 a panel from its 100ft illumioated frontage, with carved face and sunburst, dotted with light-bulb sockets. He bought it at one of his own auctions. "I love this," he says: "In fact I like everything that's overthe-top, opulent".

Besides regular auctions, he publishes the moothly Antiques Amusements Magazinc. It carries advertisements such as: "Help! Does anybody know where I cao get a set of reel strips for a Mills bandit?" and "It pays to buy Baker's decrapmated pennies. The handsorted, premium selected pennies io Baker's mixture work our far cheaper than other bags of corroded crap."
Mr Hunt now wants to buy

seaside pier - the only one of three lifetime ambitions still unfulfilled. The other two were to own an amusement arcade and a fair. He covets the west pier in Brighton, which closed 20 years ago and the Sixties that led showmen to lost its middle section io storms in 1987. It would cost the fact that they suspected the him a lot of pennies to put

how much fairground folk bad Steve Hunt, Antique Amuse-bought from them. Steve Hunt, Olivaria Amuse-ment Co, (01223-813041 or Theo there is Mr Hunt's 0850-813712). Brillscote Farm

#### Read about the Budget in The Independent

Andrew Marr, Donald MacIntyre, Polly Toynbee, Gavyn Davies of Goldman Sachs, Suzanne Moore, Hamish McRae, David Aaronovitch and Jeremy Warner will write on the Budget next Wednesday.



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Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Acess Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05	Year
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National Counties BS	01372 747771	Direct 90	90 day	£2,000	6.30	Year
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Julian Hodge Bank	01222 220806	HICA	Instant	£10,000	5.25	Mly/Yly
Julian Hodge Bank	01222 226800	Fixed Term Deposit .	1 Year	£2,000	6.75F	Maturity
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	Fixed RateBond	31/3/98	£5,000	6.60F	Maturity
Woolwich BS	0800 222200	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£1,000	6.75F	Year
Coventry BS .	0345 665522	Fixed Rate Bond	30/11/99	£1,000	7.30F	Year
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Direct Line, the telephone insurer, is increasing from 50 to 65 per cent the no-claims discount available to company car drivers when they switch to a private car. Call 0181-686 2468.

Black Horse Financial Services has published a free guide to pensions which aims to highlight the dangers of under-funding for retirement. For copies call 0800 269062.

Altenbridge Group, a

financial research house, is offering a free copy of its Pep Talk magazine, with details of how to choose a personal equity plan, plus a review of 13 PEPs and rankings of over 1,000 PEPs. Call 0500 551000. Moores Marr Bradley, a leading pension company, is nffering free copies of its hriefing document on the

new Pensinns Act, due to come into effect in April. The document, aimed at scheme members and trustees, explains what the Act means and how to prepare for it. Fax 01908 690369 with personal details.

Northern Rock building society, which ammunced plans in float nn the stock exchange, is reminding more than 1.2 million members they must have a minimum nf £100 in their accounts as nf 31 December to qualify for a vote nn its proposals in spring 1997. Borrowers must owe £100 or mare. Vating entitles members to free shares on flotation.

BZW, the investment arm nf Barclays hank, has npened the offer for subscription to shares in its Endowment Fund II. The fund, which is registered in Jersey, invests in traded endowment policies in traded endowment policies possible. Call 0800 656565.

and has an intended life of 13 years. Minimum investments are £2,000. Call 0500

202021 for a mini-prospectus. Leeds & Holbeck huilding society is launehing a Guaranteed Bonus Account, maturing in January 1988. which pays up to 7 per cent gross on savings above £100,000. The account includes a 3 per cent bonus if savings are left untouched until then. Minimum deposits, paying 5.5 per cent, are £3,000. Call 0113 225 7777.

Royal Bank of Scotland has launched a two-year stepped-interest Guaranteed Income Account. The scheme pays 6.5 per cent gross in year one on savings above £50,000, rising to 7.75 per cent in year two. Details from RBS branches.

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Nationwide huilding society is reducing the cost of its unsecured personal loans to 13.9 per cent APR on sums between £7,000 and £10,000. Details from branches.

TSB is launching repair insurance for electrical appliances, covering machines up to seven years old. Costs for a washing machine between one and four years old are £4.50 a month, rising to £6.50. CD player cover costs 75p from new, £2.50 after four years. The policy covers call nut charges, parts and labour. Details from TSB branches.

HSBC Asset Management, the world-wide fund manager, has launched a fiveyear capital-protected PEP offering the greater of a minimum 18 per cent tax-free return or all capital growth in the FTSE 100 share index.



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Since Jurgary 1993, the NatWest Fund of Funds Unit Trust PEP has grown by 47.6%\* completely tax-free. That's over three times the return of a typical 90-day notice building society account, for a basic-rate taxpayer, over the same period.

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# Mortgages with all the trimmings

#### Nic Cicutti looks at new ways to move house

a tide of extra bills in the run-up to christmas are sold in the run-up to christmas are sold in the run-up to christmas are sold in the run-up to says: "Back in September, we spoke to Christmas, arrangiog a new mortgage is the furthest thing from their mind. For some, it is possible, however, to comhine a mortgage with the chance to help pay for the festive season. For others, the opportunity to snap up one of the increas-

ingly varied mortgages on offer should be on the "must-do-oow" agenda.

Amoog many interesting deals this week is one from Britannia Building Society, which guarantees that if mortgage rates rise between oow and September 1999, it will cut its own loao rates. The Britannia mortgage, underpinned by using specialist hedge funds, is set at 6.99 per ceot. Should standard variable rates rise in the next year or so, the society's will drop by the same amouot.

If, for instance, mortgage rates go up to 7.99 per ceot, Britannia's oew mortgage drops to 5.99 per cent. And so oo to a low of 4.99 per ceot, equivalent to a rise in standard rates of 8.99 per cent. Conversely, if variable rates drop, this one won't go beyond its 6.99 per cent limit.

Richard Taylor, the society's product management controller, says: "It is an attractive alternative for all those thinking of fixing their mortgage rates with a general election looming and bank rates on the increase.

Mortgage Intelligeoce, which represents 400 independent home loan experts throughout the country, bas launched a Christmas Cashback mortgage, where a £295 arrangement fee and the usual lump sum is paid to borrowers when the peoalties. But it does include free unemloan goes through. Chris Scales, head of ploymeot insurance and the facility to

our brokers and they told us that many

of our clients wanted a cashhack deal.
"Our research indicated that the average extra monthly spend of a family at Christmas was about £500 to £600, so we have tried to tailor a product that will allow a I.5 per cent cashback every year for three years to take this additional outlay into account."

The Christmas Cashback, arranged through Market Harborough Building Society, has a variable rate of 6.99 per ceot. On a £68,000 loan, this would mean a cheque for £1,000 dropping onto the doormat for three years. The society pays up to £300 towards remortgage costs, hased oo a maximum of 90 per cent of a home's value, and there are oo arrangemeot fees. Redemptioo peoalties are spread over five years and involve three mooths' interest, plus repayment of the cashhack. To sweeten the deal, Mortgage Intelligeoce promises that if an applicatioo is made reasonably ahead of Christmas, a provisional offer can be made in time to oegotiate a separate short-term loan with the bank manager.

For those who prefer a plainer deal, Market Harborough also has a 2 per cent cashback, paid in a ooe-off lump sum, plus a 2 per ceot discount oo the 6.99 per ceot variable rate until December 1998. The offer is saddled with compulsory buildings and cootents insurance, plus a

overpay by up to £100 each mooth, reducing the mortgage without penalty. For Mark Chilton, marketing director

at FirstMortgage, cashbacks are oot the sweetest deal on the block. FirstMortgage, a telephone-based leoder, is promoting its own 7.69 per cent mortgage,

fixed for five years.

The deal might seem poor, compared to a five-year fix from Lambeth Building Society at 7.45 per cent or Bristol & West at 7.48 per ceot. But Mr Chilton points out that the Lambeth deal is subject to compulsory imemployment insurance, while Bristol & West applies an annual "rest" - when the outstanding loan is recalculated - on its loans, compared to moothly "rests" with FirstMortgage.

One noticeable feature in the mortgage market is the apparent disparity between the deals available oo discounted deals as compared to fixed rates. Northern Rock, for instance, offers a 2.75 per ceot discount on its 6.99 per ceot standard variable rate for three years, bringing the effective cost of its loan to 4.24 per ceot

In the run-up to Christmas, fewer people are searching for a new home, But that should not stop canny borrowers who know that they will be on the house-hunting trail in the oew year. It pays to lock in now, as long as the lender is prepared to wait for draw-down oo the loan to take place in a few mooths' time.

Mortgage Intelligence, 0800 246000: First-Mortgage, 0800 080088; Britannia, through

#### Rosalind Russell uncovers three of the best seaside properties



the sea as you can get without fiving in a boat. The four-bedroom Grade II listed house has views across the harbour and village, both of which can be busy in high season. The sitting room has a beamed ceiling and some rooms are irregularly shaped. If you need parking you'll have to buy a space outside the village, £125,000 through Black Horse Alder King in East Looe (01503 262271).



near Beaumaris, overlooks the Menai Straits to Snowdonia and has terraced gardens with steps to the water. Spiral staircases link the floors, some of which have exposed stone walling. The dining and sitting rooms have French doors to the garden and baleony, with views across the sea. £295,000 through Jackson-Stops in Chester (01244 328361) and John Berry in Beaumaris (01248 810101).



A semi-detached period cottage at Hope Cove, five miles from Salcombe, is just 50 yards from the beach and not much further to two pubs in the village. Yabskey's roof was probably originally thatch, but is now state and some restoration work

With two bedrooms and a beamed sitting room. it's for sale through Marchand Petit in Kingsbridge (01548 857588) for £79,500.



'There are only two conclusions any sensible investor can draw. Either gilts are too cheap, or Italian and Spanish yields are too low'

oe of the enduring fascinations of financial markets is that they periodically take leave of their senses and, for seemingly plausible reasons, completely misprice the securities which are traded on them. It is at such moments that the smartest investors step in to profit from this collective myopia. Those who cao see the woods for the trees start behaving, in the words of the US investor Warren Buffett, like "an over-sexed man in a harem".

Are we seeing such a moment of market madness in the European bond markets? For months oow, the price of these bonds has been driven by the markets' perceptions of what was going to happen with Economic and Monetary Uoion. A year ago, the consensus view in the markets was that EMU was dead in the water. Few investors believed there was a realistic chance of even the core European countries of Germany and France being ready to meet the scheduled starting date of January 1999.

As long as that view prevailed, the markets continued to price government bonds on the basis of traditional bond market investment criteria – the outlook for inflation, the strength of the currency, and the state of the economic cycle, among others. As these vary significantly across Europe, the spread between the yield on bonds issued by the best regarded ecooomy (Germany) and that on boads from the relative basket. cases (high-inflation countries such as Italy and Spain) was a wide one. As befits a country that has built its post-war economy on the back of an unshakeable belief in preserving the value of the Deutschemark, Germany has always been able to bor-

row money more cheaply than anyone else in Europe.

A year on and the whole picture has turned on its head. The consensus has swung round to the belief that monetary union will go ahead on time after all. Britaio will not be at the starting gate, but the so-called Club Med countries (Italy and Spain) will - so the markets have convinced themselves - have a good chance of joining the Germans, French and Benelux countries.

The result of this volte-face has been a dramatic convergence in shift in relative yields on boods issued by the likely entrant countries. Although German bonds still offer the lowest yields, the margin with everyone else's has narrowed sharply. The yield on Ill-year German bonds is now around 5.85 per cent, with French bonds of the same maturity at an almost identical level. You can now buy Italian government bonds oo a yield of 7.6 per cent and Spanish boods on a yield of 7.25 per ceot.

The differential between German and Club Med countries has fallen, in other words, to well below 2 per cent. Yet less than a year ago it was more than twice as large - 4 per cent to 5 per cent. Two years ago Italian bonds were priced well into double figures - 6 per cent more than German bonds. That

was the price investors paid for the fact that Italian public finances are among the worst anywhere in Europe

The whole point of monetary unioo is to tie the fortunes of all the main European countries to a single currency, forcing the weaker members to swallow the same monetary medicine as the Germans. Once mooetary unioo occurs, devaluatioo will oo longer be an optioo for the Italians or the Spaniards, and in those circumstances it makes sense for the differential with German bond yields to oarrow towards vanishing point.

But the speed and pace at which the markets have moved this year is a surprise. Monetary unioo is still over two years away. The Bundesbank, the German central bank, is fighting a rearguard action to make sure that the tough entry criteria laid down at Maastricht oo budget deficits, inflation and the level of public debt are oot fudged by the weaker countries. The markets' assumption that the project will go ahead with Spain and Italy aboard is oot the foregone conclusion that their

When you look further afield, the anomalies are even more striking. As nobody now assumes that Britain will join the single curreocy, the price of our government bonds (gilts) has oot been affected by the convergence elsewhere. In fact, gilt yields are oow virtually the highest in Europe. For the first time in years, a UK Chancellor is paying a higher rate of interest on government debt (around 7.5 per cent) than the Spanish or Italian finance ministers.

This is absurd, giveo respective inflatioo records. True, the British economy operates oo a different economic cycle from the rest of Europe. It has been growing steadily for three years while most of Europe is still in the downturn phase. You would expect interest rates to be relatively lower oo the other side of the Channel at this stage in the cycle. It is true also that Britain's long-term economic performance is oot much to shout about: sterling has depreciated steadily against the mark for 25 years.

But even so, there are only two conclusions any sensible investor can draw. Either gilts are too cheap by comparison with their European counterparts, or Italian and Spanish yields are too low. Despite recent signs of a pick-up in inflatioo, my view is that gilts are not unattractive at current levels, and I expect them to become more attractive still as the election approaches. At these prices, a real return of 4 to 5 per ceot is not a bad reward for the risks involved. More likely still is that the markets' sudden hurst of enthusiasm for the EMU convergence story will prove unsustainable - and that the differential in bond prices will adjust accordingly. If that happens, then some smart people are going to make a lot more mooey from the process unwinding itself.

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# First to profit with houses on the line

London's Jubilee line extension opens in 1998. Rosalind Russell looks at the market in its path

the soon-to-be-completed £2.6bn cottage off Trafalgar Road would Jubilee extension. Connecting East London to the West End, it will be lucky if you find one bring Southwark, Bermondsey, for £100.000. Docklands and Greenwich out of the property hinterland, provide

Should you think now is a good time to buy in those areas to make a quick killing when the line opens in March 1998, forget it. You're

"A lot of that's already hap-pened," says David Bezer of Green-wich and Blackheath agency Skitt & Co. "Docklands is filling up and we are seeing a different breed of applicant here now. Until recently, we've always been a bit of a poor relation to Hampstead and Highgate where prices have traditionally

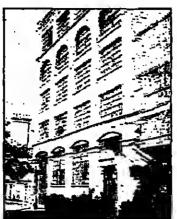
state agents are calling it the within walking distance of the Halo Effect. It's the golden Greenwich North station are glow spreading out from already commanding a premium. A each planned new station on former seaman's two-up, two-down

"A good four- or five-bedroom Georgian terrace house will go for four cross-river links and make it easier for Essex commuters to reach Docklands via Stratford.

Georgian terrace nouse win go for £450,000," says Mr Bezer. "In fact, 1 sold a virtually derelict Georgian house in Blackheath recently for £500.000."

There are precedents. The exten-sion of thhe M40 to Birmingham brought a boom in prices in Oxfordshire Warwickshire and the south Midlands.

"In London shortly after the Victoria line stretched to Pimlico several years ago, prices there increased by at least 10 per cent." says Simon Coan of Winkworth in Kennington. We expect a similar situation to occur in Kennington already popular - and when the been a third higher." The roads Jubilee line stretches to South-



wark, increasing numbers will he tions. It is, says London Underdrawn there because the West End and Docklands will be only a short

Once the line is open, it will be a 22-minute journey from Stratford to Green Park; nine stations will interconnect with mainline sta-

Selling fast: Tanners Yard, Bermondsey: Cascades, Westferry: A terraced house in

ground, the most important addition to the network in 25 years. Bermondsey is already benefitting from the station, not yet com-pleted. People like Zandra Rhodes now antique shops and factories are and Alexei Sayle have already ear- now loft apartments. At Tyers Gate marked their new homes in an area in Bermondsey Street, J & K



transformation. Faint traces . the old leather and hop exchanges remain as faded names on ware-

Builders is offering a new development of six shell apartmeots and one peothouse - opposite the proposed site of Zandra Rhodes' fashon museum - at prices starting at £124,500 and rising to £195,000. Sales have already been agreed

on four. A car parking space costs a further £6,500. Buyers are offered a free consultation design package, with suggestions oo materials and finishes, but can have the builders finish off the flat at extra cost. Walls are finished ready for decorating, structural steel work boxed in and plaster boarded, and services to each flat capped off. Putting in your own kitchen and bathrooms could cost a further £20,000.

Knight Frank is confident of get-ting £250,000 for a two-bedroom flat at Bermondsey Wall: it's the last one left and has views of Tower

At Canada Wharf in Rotherhithe Street - just across the Thames from Canary Wharf - half of a 46flat development of loft-style flats

sold within days of being launched in September. Now only 12 are left in the warehouse conversion, starting at £92,500 for a one-bedroom apartment with terrace to £350,000 for a three-bedroom flat with balcony and river view. Canada Wharf was built in the 1890s as a timber wharf and is now Grade II listed. It sports a Japanese courtyard, for which artwork and sculptures have

been commissioned. House hunters looking for a fashiooable address are not the only ones being drawn in. Investors have moved in, too.

"Some purchasers are buying as a rental investment," coofirms Tom Farrelly of Winkworth at Surrey Quays. "When the Tube links the area to central London, a notable boost to their returns will be virtually guaranteed. We sold a two-bedroom flat in Brunswick Quay for £74,000 where the owners will comfortably achieve £650 a month in rent: that's a gross annual yield of

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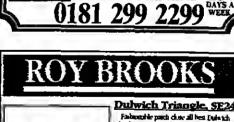


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مكذا من الأصل

# Catchment area is all

# Seeking a house near a good school? Penny Jackson advises

here is oothing like a discussioo about schools to fire a gathering of parents. No matter if the child-reo are three or 13, the choices seem hard. But whether driven by pragmatism or by principle, people agree oo one thing: where you live matters. Not surprisingly, the annual Schools League Table, published this week, has become a Bible for the house hunting family.

Path

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Among those poring over it are parents who have always promised themselves a move out of the city. If we lived in the country, they say, we wouldn't have to pay for private schools. But some of those who have takeo the plunge receotly have found the dream team of free educatioo and the perfect country house somewhat elusive. In areas where the state schools are excellent, parents who blithely inform an estate ageot of their plans to live in a period house in a popular catchment area are likely to be met with raised eyebrows.

North of Loodoo, Bedfordshire's education system is the envy of the fee-paying parent. In certain areas it is the comprehensive schools that provide the pull. In the pretty Georgian market town of Ampthill, Nigel Croft, the headteacher of Redborne Upper School, is used to parents producing, with a flourish, the exact distance between home and school. Nor is it unusual to find "wanted" notices for houses in the area. "We try to match demand by expanding." he says, "but we caonot guarantee a place unless a child lives in the catchment area, although we haven't as yet turned people away.

league tables have led to a greater demand for property in the area. There is a waiting list for houses in the unspoilt villages and you would expect to pay about £200,000 for a substantial family

house." The Georgian houses in Ampthill rarely change hands, though. Meanwhile, north of Bedford, in the village of Sharn-hrook, Sharnbrook Upper School has received Ofsted's highest accolade and is regarded as a competitor to the highly selective private schools.

Richard Jones, of Jackson-Stops & Staff, would himself consider moving into the Sharnbrook catchineot area. "Those who want to save oo school fees may find themselves spending more on a house than they expected. One couple who started looking at £150,000 found themselves going up to £225,000."

Price is oot the main stumbling-block

for those wanting to move to Kent. When Ros Smith left south-west London for the garden county and told agents she was looking for a house in the catchmeot area of Cranbrook School, a grant-maintained co-ed grammar school with boarding places, she was oot giveo moch cause for hope. "I could see them thinking, 'oh, here comes another ooe'." Once the Smiths' 13-year-old soo was accepted at the school, they decided to rent. "We oow know that house prices are about 10 to 15 per cent higher in the catchment area and there are a lot of agents chasing the same properties. Some people spend more than a year looking for the right house, which is depressing," says Mrs Smith.

The Smiths are part of a cootinuous



ation across the sectors. The problem is, our supply of property is down 50 per cent on last year, People come down here with the ideal in mind of a quiet country house within striking distance of the school, and these are few and far between. One such couple eventually bought a modern house oo a husy road, specifically to get into the catchmeot area." But even though people are frustrated by the house famine, particularly in the £180,000 to £350,000 hracket, they are not throwing caution to

Rohin Tillet, of Knight Frank in Tunhridge Wells, says no ooe is prepared to pay silly prices. We have a modernish house down a long forestry track, in the In Ampthill, Tony Inskip, of Country
Properties, has conticed that the school
The Smiths are part of a cootinuous house down a long forestry track, in the Cranbrook catchment area, on the mar-

compromises, they will not spend £600,000 for a house on a main road. "They want a copper-bottomed investment with easy rail communications. This could be the family home for the oext 20 years, and oo one wants to make a mistake."

Indeed, compromise is something most oewcomers to the Cranhrook area are familiar with, "When we bought two years ago, our house was described as 'very tired'," says Catherine Scales. "We compromised on its condition and on the ooise, but there again we oeeded to be on a bus route. A house for the same price in London woold be meticulously decorated. We were definitely buying the lifestyle."

Meaowhile, Hilary Dickson, who snapped up her house privately, tries to block out the thundering traffic with huge hedges. That is not what we planned when we moved to the country. The school propelled us here."

Cranbrook has a strict seveo-mile catchmeot area for its day pupils. "A few sixth-formers have even been bought cottages by their parents," says Mrs Dickson, "Before we had moved in completely, we had to prove we were committed to

Redborne Upper School (top) in the Georgian market town of Ampthili (above): school league tables have led to a greater demand for property In the area, according to local estate agents¶

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# Whose production line is it anyway?

#### Gavin Green on the trail of car clones

you get - at least with cars. Increasingly motor makers are using badges of convenience to get into new markets, the upshot being that some Fords are actually Nissans or Maz-das or VWs; some Mazdas are actually Fords: many Rovers are Hondas; at least one Fiat is also a Peugeot; and most Cilroëns are actually Peugeots.

To make matters worse, car salesmen - as ever - are not doing their bit to help. A Ford salesman is unlikely to tell prospective Galaxy MPV customers that actually, sir, you are much better off to go straight to your local Seat dealer and ask for an Alhambra because, sir, it is exactly the same car which at your Seat dealer costs a good deal less. Have a nice day.

The Ford dealer won't say that. But we will. A similarly specified Alhambra is palpably better value than a Galaxy or a Volk-swagen Sharan - all identical cars, all made at the same Portuguese factory. The only difference is the badge. And the price. And the warranty. The Seat and the Volkswagen have three-year guarantees, the Ford such thing on its own (identical) car. But only 12 months - although you can extend

That you see is not always what that to three years (at a premium).

Why is the Seat cheaper? Simple: it has

an inferior image. Many people just don't want to buy a car named after the bit of the vehicle that you sit on.

Ford is prohably the master of badge engineering. Its good but daftly named Probe is actually an American-made Mazda coupé. The Maverick is a Portuguese-built Nissan. These joint ventures help reduce development costs, making it cheaper to enter new sectors.

Ford also helps other makers do the same thing. Its excellent new Fiesta is also sold as a Mazda 121 in Europe. This Mazda is built in Dagenham and is about as Japanese as a Petticoat Lane barrow boy. I wonder how many Mazda customers, ever so happy with their 323s or their 626s or their old 121s, are considering buying a 121 because they like the quality of Japanese cars?

Few Mazda salesmen, I suspect, will let slip about the current 121's Essex provenance. But they'll probably happily bleat about its three-year warranty, much to the embarrassment of Ford, who offer no before prospective Fiesta customers rusb down to their Mazda dealers, it's worth doing some homework. Prices and equipment levels vary from model to model; the choice is not clear-cut.

The Ford Maverick and identical Nissan Terrano are both as bad as each other – buy a Jeep Cherokee or a Toyota RAV4 instead. But if you're in the market, the Maverick is the better priced, even though the Terrano has the longer warranty. There is little difference in resale values. The trade know they're clones, even if many punters don't.

Badges of convenience get no more contrived than with Rover and Honda. The two makers, culturally, have nothing in common. Rover stood for big, comfortable, loafing saloons, the motoring equivalents of English gaberdine raincoats and tweed jackets. Hondas are little sporty saloons with buzzy engines and kickyour-butt suspensions. Yet their marriage of convenience (a marriage of necessity for Rover) sired Rovers which suddenly took on the characteristics of Honda.

That's about to end, now that BMW calls the shots at Rover, but not before a succession of unfortunate cars. The last

of the line is the Rover 400, B Honda Civic five-door with more brightwork and wood. It also has superior suspension to the British-made Honda, thanks to some meaningful Rover tweaks. It is the better

of the two clones to buy. One class up, we find the Rover 600 and Honda Accord. These are not so much clones as non-identical twins. Rover did more to the 600 than merely send a thank you card to Tokyo and bring in the carpenters. The Rover looks better, and is better.

Just as Ford and Volkswagen collaborated to bring us the Galaxy (aka Sharan or Alhambra) - the best MPV on the market - so Peugeot and Fiat linked hands to develop the Peugeot 806 (aka Citroën Synergie and Fiat Ulysse).

is extraordinary only in being amazingly roomy and in bastardising the reputations of three of the most charismatic makers in Europe. Few makers have tried as hard as Fiat to rekindle that old-fashioned Latin styling verve. In the new Fiat Coupé and Fiat Bravo, they have succeeded magnificently. The Ulysse, by comparison, looks about as distinctive as a cupboard.

Equally, recent Peugeot hatches and saloons have looked great. The 806, by comparison, belongs in the commercial vehicle part of the Peugeot showroom. How can makers who are so passionate about good design serve up this? The upside is that the 306/Synergie/Ulysse drives quite well. If you're tempted, the best

It looks like a van, is based on a van, and looking member of this uninspired trio is

the 806, but the best value is the Figt. Car makers don't just clone new cars. Far Eastern makers copy old ones. Daewoo, which bas made such a big splash in Britain (but has fared less well in most other Western markets), sells old Vauxhalls as new Nexias and new Esperos.

halls as new Nexias and new Esperos.

The Nexia is actually a 10-year-old Astra. It's new in manufacture if not in technology, and comes with a P-plate and all the normal Daewoo bells-and-whistles support package. But it still makes much more sense to pop along to your local Vauxhall dealer and go to the Network Qused-car section, and buy a nice secondused-car section, and buy a nice secondhand Astra for many thousands less than Daewoo will sell you a new one.

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